

**Re-Numbering Souls: Lay Methodism and Church Growth
in St. Stephen, New Brunswick, 1861 - 1881**

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Abstract

Historians have often assumed that the secularization of religious practice paralleled or followed the industrialization of late nineteenth century Canadian communities and the declining influence of churches on elite culture and the state. The neglect of lay religion, however, has left this hypothesis untested. In the two decades following the first New Brunswick census of religion in 1861, Wesleyan Methodists remained the single largest religious group in the parish of St. Stephen. Yet the dynamics and demography of church growth show that low and fluid church involvement characterized both the rural settlements and expanding villages of this pre-industrial parish. By their remarkably varied and independent choices of religious affiliation, lay men and women determined the size and nature of Methodist communities and anticipated modern 'consumer religion'. Nevertheless, the content of their piety remained in essential continuity with the Methodist tradition.

In fact, associational fluidity was rooted in the nature of Methodist belief, worship, and polity. Within the parish,

church growth reflected both transience and revivalism, the latter influenced by both wider evangelical expectations and local circumstances. Many Methodists moved to or from other denominations or maintained multiple affiliations. Roughly half of Methodist families may have attended Methodist churches, but membership rates were low, with high turnover.

Despite the ideology of family religion and Christian nurture, church membership was neither a prescribed nor socially timed rite of passage. Men were more likely to join the church while married and to join with or follow their female relations. Women--attracted by the ideal of 'evangelical womanhood' and unique opportunities for community and voice--were the majority of members, and demonstrated greater independence than men in timing their memberships at any stage of the life course, in association with or apart from their families.

Yet much of traditional Methodist piety persisted in St. Stephen during the 1860s and 1870s. Although the house 'church' would disappear, the class meeting survived until 1890. Revivals occurred frequently, and church membership remained a primarily adult decision, sometimes preceded by adult baptism. 'Spiritual histories' still memorialized local Methodists, recounting their conversions and, for a few, even sanctification. These 'histories' along with Methodist hymnody and Methodist involvement in the rural

cemetery movement portrayed the evangelical version of 'holy dying'.

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Chapter I

Towards a New History of Lay Methodism

Data fail...to attempt any computation of the infinite value of souls saved forever; now numbered with the white-robed and blood-washed multitude...But the aggregate of ascertained result, as tabulated and authenticated in recently published departmental statistics, has surpassed our most eager and sanguine hope and anticipation.¹

If the results of the most carefully taken census ever attempted in Canada... and sustained by the records of the past, cannot obtain credence at this moment, they will in time to come. The triumph of truth over delusion, popular infatuation and local prejudices, if retarded, cannot be for ever prevented.²

Although well-fitted to an age in which governments increasingly tabulated social facts, the quantification of religion predated the national census records of the nineteenth century. The "statistics" described by Stephen F. Huestis in his centennial celebration of Methodism in Atlantic Canada originated partly in the organizational needs of voluntarist churches. But neither voluntarism nor

¹ Stephen F. Huestis, Centenary of Methodism in Eastern British America 1782-1882 (Halifax: S. F. Huestis, 1882), p. 68.

² J. C. Tache, The Canadian Census of 1871: Remarks on Mr. Harvey's Paper Published in the February Number of the Canadian Monthly (n.p. n.d. c. 1872), p. 5.

the belief in a regenerate church membership alone account for the "computation" of souls. As Patricia Cline Cohen has observed, the Puritans kept membership records, but did not conceive of counting them: thus, they described widespread declension while their church admissions steadily rose. In contrast, seventeenth century Anglicans retreated "from the doctrine of predestination in its Calvinist sense" and began keeping both registers and totals of their progress in North America. By the first complete Methodist membership returns of 1767, the "extension of numeracy" had accelerated, reflecting greater certainty about the regulation of the physical or social world and lessened belief in "inscrutable divine control".³ Yet Methodist compilers saw no contradiction in numbering souls. Both inspired by and interpreted according to the evangelical version of the idea of progress, the quantification of religion vindicated the ways of Providence.⁴ In an address to the Eastern British America Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, only a few months after the first federal Canadian census of 1871, Revs. John H. James and Luke H. Wiseman approved the

³ Patricia Cline Cohen, A Calculating People: The Spread of Numeracy in Early America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 49, 79-83; Robert Currie, Alan Gilbert, and Lee Horsley, Churches and Churchgoers: Patterns of Church Growth in the British Isles since 1700 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 12.

⁴ Kenneth E. Rowe, "Methodist History at the Bicentennial: The State of the Art", Methodist History, 1984, p. 87.

"constructive tendency to gauge spiritual results by the numerical strength of our fellowship". From these results, they concluded that "the rapid and vigorous growth of the Methodist Churches in the Western world is without parallel in Christian history."⁵

Clerical interest in Methodist statistics for Atlantic Canada had accelerated after the creation in 1855 of the Eastern British America Conference out of the Maritime districts serviced by British missionaries. The stages of record-keeping closely paralleled the improvement of census returns. Methodism in the Maritime provinces had upgraded its "statistics" in 1857 and again in 1864;⁶ the first census including religion occurred in Nova Scotia in 1851, and in New Brunswick in 1861. By these decades, other voluntarist churches in Britain and North America had joined in systematically tabulating their flocks.⁷ Although American clerics lacked regional totals of adherents comparable to those available in Canada, they could cite denominational figures or the church seating and

⁵ Minutes, Eastern British America Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church (henceforth EBAC), 1871.

⁶ The first Standing Resolution on Quarterly Statistics appeared in the Conference Report of 1857, and an 1864 resolution created a standing committee on Conference Statistics, which were published thereafter.

⁷ Currie et al., p. 12; Paul Goodman, "A Guide to American Church Membership Data Before the Civil War", Historical Methods Newsletter, 10(1977), p. 185.

congregational sizes reported in American census records.

Some decried the "statistical obsession" of nineteenth century churches and the great temptation to denominational rivalry or spiritual pride.⁸ The newspaper of Maritime Methodism published regular progress reports and debated denominational size with Baptists and Presbyterians.⁹ The statistical obsession was reportedly less prevalent in Britain, where Jabez Bunting had defended the post-schism membership decline of Wesleyan Methodism by charging that the denomination had been guilty of the sin of David. In 1896, a Nova Scotian minister George J. Bond repeated this common charge against clerical compilers: "Figures are not always perfect criteria of success, and numbering the hosts of Israel, once done impiously, is still sometimes done invidiously." This did not restrain him from concluding that Methodism was probably the largest Protestant denomination on earth. As his colleague, George O. Huestis, observed, others had followed the early example of Methodism:

⁸ Martin E. Marty, Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 170-71.

⁹ The Provincial Wesleyan (henceforth TPW), 10 October 1860, p. 1 col. 7; 9 January 1867, p. 2 cols. 3-6; 23 January 1867, p. 2 cols. 3-4; 10 June 1868, p. 1 col. 6; 27 July 1870, p. 1 cols. 4-5; 27 November 1872, p. 2 col. 5; 12 March 1873, p. 2 cols. 1-2; 19 March 1873, p. 2 col. 4; 19 December 1874, p. 2 col. 7; 9 January 1880, p. 4 cols. 1-2; 16 January 1880, p. 4 col. 2; 13 February 1880, p. 4 cols. 4-5.

"Everything in religion is now being tabulated, except the reality itself."¹⁰

Despite the establishment of quantification in the methodology of social history, its practitioners have been slower in calculating "'the arithmetic of faith'".¹¹ This partly reflects the secondary place of religion in much of North American, particularly Canadian, social history, but also the perspective from which the history of religion has often been written. Jon Butler's judgment that historians know less about popular or lay religion in America than "elsewhere in the trans-Atlantic European community"¹² must be amplified: they know even less about lay religion in Canada. Until very recently, religion "existed on the margins of historical scholarship; as for a history that treated religion as a way of defining self, of feeling and faith, this was hardly developed at all."¹³ Butler's agenda

¹⁰ Bernard Semmel, The Methodist Revolution (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 181; George J. Bond, "25 Million Methodists", The Halifax Herald, 27 June 1896, p. 23 cols. 2-3; p. 15 col. 2.

¹¹ Cited in John Kent, Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism (London: Epworth Press, 1978), p. 18.

¹² Jon Butler, "The Future of American Religious History: Prospectus, Agenda, Trans-Atlantic Problematique", William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series XLII(1985), p. 169

¹³ Carl Berger, The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing 1900 to 1970 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), p. 292.

for research that goes beyond the strictly ecclesiastical or elite echoes earlier calls from Martin E. Marty for American church history, and N. K. Clifford for Canadian.¹⁴ As Joyce Appleby has written, the social history of religion should reconnect "formal doctrine" with "the practices of believers in particular places".¹⁵

One such group of believers were the Methodists of the parish of St. Stephen in the southwest corner in New Brunswick. During the 1860s and 1870s, men and women from the villages along the St. Croix river and the inland settlements moved in and out of the layers of Methodist church life through many paths. The largest number were listed as Methodist adherents by the 1861 provincial or 1871 federal census. Many went to the church for the rites of passage: baptism, marriage, or burial. The congregation consisted of 'hearers', those who casually or regularly attended church services or meetings. A smaller group were more involved: they might teach, attend, or enroll their children in the Sunday School; they might sing in the choir or become the nineteenth century equivalent of fundraisers.

¹⁴ Marty, pp. 167-68; N. K. Clifford, "Religion in the Development of Canadian Society: An Historiographical Analysis", Church History, 38(1969), p. 522.

¹⁵ Joyce Appleby, "Value and Society", in Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era, ed. Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 300.

Of the more regularly committed laity, those with some economic security might rent a pew, subscribe to The Provincial Wesleyan, or support the Missionary or Educational Societies. Apart from those listed as adherents in a census, the smallest groups left the most enduring records: those listed as lay leaders, adult baptisms, or church members. These made up the Methodist 'Society', the core of the church. Yet these records of adherence, leadership, or membership were often more enduring than the affiliations they traced. Many individuals had come only recently to the parish; others would leave during these decades. Many would change their nominal adherence between childhood and family formation, others even later in life. A 'Methodist' seeking membership or adult baptism joined "the church of his choice"¹⁶, more often 'hers'. On earth at least, Methodist souls were not numbered forever, but renumbered with the ebb and flow of church growth.

This thesis will explore these choices of adherence or membership, the contexts in which they were made, and their significance for our understanding of religion in nineteenth century New Brunswick. This assertion that these were indeed choices made in contexts is intended to shift the perspective from which much of the history of church growth

¹⁶ The obituary of William Thompson, St. Croix Courier (henceforth SCC), 9 October 1873, p. 2 col. 4.

has been written: "Historians tell us how churches have evolved; sociologists tell us what churches and their members are like and do", but few have explored "how and why churches get, keep, and lose their members". Both traditional church history with its focus on clergy, elites, and their institutions and social history with its focus on cultural or economic forces offer valuable approaches to the study of church growth which this thesis will draw on. But used exclusively, these approaches convey an image of a malleable and passive laity, acted on by exterior forces, whether great preachers and preaching, or social dislocation and control. Even the wording of Currie et alia's observation exemplifies this, although their subsequent analyses make clear that this is not their intention. By reversing this perspective, this thesis will show how the shifting denominational affiliations of Methodist adherents and members in St. Stephen illustrate Butler's hypothesis concerning the nature of popular religion in North America. Although surrounded by the "supple influences" of religious or social context, men and women could shape "their personal and collective religious identities from materials of their own choosing in their own fashion and in their own time".¹⁷

¹⁷ Currie et al., p. 4; Butler, p. 177.

This perspective on lay religion, this focus on Methodism, and this methodology of the community study address several key themes in North American social history. The first of these themes is the contrasting significance of religion between the late twentieth century and the nineteenth, when as some have argued "religion was probably the single most important institutional framework within which society operated".¹⁸ As the study of religion in Canada has, until recently, focused on the largest groups rather than native religion or Judaism, this has meant the institutional framework of Christian churches. Secularization, "the process by which 'religious thinking, practice and institutions lose social significance'", has thus implicitly informed the history of religion in Canada, and explicitly dominated its sociology. The secularization of the cultural or institutional influence of Canadian churches, particularly in the realm of formal ideas, education or politics, has been well researched. But the timing and nature of the secularization of religious practice remain unclear. As Reginald Bibby has admitted, "it is difficult to assess how much the present religious situation" -- very low church participation, and, as will be

¹⁸ Del Muise, "The Atlantic Provinces", Vol. 1 of A Reader's Guide to Canadian History, ed. D. A. Muise (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 105; See also J. K. Johnson, "Upper Canada", in the same volume, pp. 140-41.

elaborated, participation of a particular type--"represents a departure from the past".¹⁹

The evidential core of secularization theory lies in Britain and Europe since the early nineteenth century, when observers commented on the decline of church participation, particularly among the lowest or highest ranking social groups. Revisionist historians have qualified this by arguing that this trend had begun several centuries earlier. Indeed, as "the demonstration of erratic Christianization" is pushed farther and farther back into time,²⁰ some might conclude that the church is like G. K. Chesterton's spirit of Father Christmas, always dying but never dead. For the United States, historians have suggested a different model: a boom and bust cycle with low points at the late eighteenth century and the interwar years of the twentieth, and somewhat higher points at the end of the nineteenth century and, in Canada as well, during the post World War II decade. Based on church memberships, communion rolls, or church seating, the latest estimates of nineteenth century American

¹⁹ Roger O'Toole, "Some Good Purpose: Notes on Religion and Political Culture in Canada", in Models and Myths in Canadian Sociology, ed. S. D. Berokowitz (Toronto: Butterworth & Co., 1984), p. 76; Reginald Bibby, Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1987), p. 94.

²⁰ Hugh McLeod, Religion and the People of Western Europe, 1789-1970 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 27-28; Butler, pp. 171-76.

church growth suggest that one tenth of the population at the time of the Revolution were affiliated with a church through membership, seasonal communion, or attendance, and one third by 1890.²¹ Unfortunately, there are no comparable Canadian studies, as Robert T. Handy and Goldwin French's conclusion that Canada was, in Handy's words, a more "'churchly'" nation is derived from wholly different evidence,²² census totals of nominal adherence. In sum, it is easy for the nostalgic believer or the presentist historian to overestimate the extent of public religiosity in the past.

Establishing the nature of public religiosity in the past is equally challenging: as Jon Butler asks, "Did the shift from early modern to modern society change the forms of lay-institutional interaction?" Historians and sociologists have rediscovered Adam Smith's model for this interaction in the idea of a pluralist "religious economy" increasingly unregulated by the state.²³ In other words, the erosion

²¹ Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, "Turning Pews Into People: Estimating Nineteenth Century Church Membership", Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 25(1986), p. 186.

²² Robert T. Handy, A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 259; Goldwin French, "The Evangelical Creed in Canada", in The Shield of Achilles: Aspects of Canada in the Victorian Age, ed. W. L. Morton (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1968), p. 18.

²³ Butler, p. 179; Finke and Stark, "How the Upstart Sects Won America 1776-1850", Journal for the Scientific Study

over the past three centuries of "social, cultural, or legal pressure" on individuals to join a church "not of their choosing", has meant that all churches "have come to be voluntary associations whose members join and leave them at will".²⁴ Peter Berger has linked secularization with a continuum from the voluntarism of early Reformation dissent to consumption oriented contemporary religion. Dominated by the logic of market economics, twentieth century churches diversified and standardized their holdings and offerings to comfortably meet only the demands of a secularized society. In this view, religion was pushed to societal extremes--paradoxically privatized to relate only to inner belief or the familial rites of passage, but also reserved for the symbolic and sacralized apparatus of the state, whether civic ceremonies or the conduct of war. According to Berger, the churches only fared better in North America than in Europe because they themselves became secularized.²⁵ The most recent and prominent Canadian exponent of this view is Reginald Bibby, who argues that contemporary Canada features

of Religion, 28(1989), pp. 41-42.

²⁴ Currie et al., p. 116.

²⁵ Peter L. Berger, The Sacred Canopy: Elements of A Sociological Theory of Religion (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), Chapters 5 and 6; McLeod, Ch. 8, and Hans Mol, Faith and Fragility: Religion and Identity in Canada (Burlington, Ont.: Trinity Press, 1985) also express some of these themes.

both "religion a la carte" and a "consumer approach to religion". In other words, churches function as merchandisers selling undemanding fragments of religion, and individuals approach the churches as consumers without commitment.²⁶

In this interpretation of contemporary religion, pluralism within religious groups has superseded the older pattern of pluralism between them. Comparing religion in nineteenth century continental Europe, the United States, and Britain with religion in Ontario, John Webster Grant has suggested the models of "a state monopoly with marginal provision for individual initiative", "unbridled free enterprise", "a class structure with some fluidity", and "a typically Canadian mixed economy". Both Grant and William Westfall have argued that despite disestablishment, denominational boundaries were more fluid in the early nineteenth century Canada than in later decades.²⁷ Bibby also notes a popular theory that the Canadian "religious market was much freer in the past", even though this would

²⁶ Bibby, pp. 110, 133.

²⁷ John Webster Grant, A Profusion of Spires: Religion in Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 52, 67, 153, 220, and 225; Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era (Burlington, Ont.: Welch Publishing Co., 1988), p. 12; William Westfall, Two Worlds: the Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario, (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), p. 47.

seem to undermine a recent timetable for consumer religion. His argument concerning its present nature is thus somewhat ambivalent. Although he claims that a Canadian civic ideal of pluralism "has only solidified religious affiliational loyalty", he goes on to argue that in a "milieu" of standardized religious offerings where relativism is the norm and proselytism is frowned on, "people would be expected to move in random fashion from one group to another". Yet he suggests that such moves are the exception; in a 1985 survey three fourths of the two largest groups of respondents--Anglicans and United Church adherents--held the same affiliation as their parents. Grant's analysis of the effect of the "consumer mentality" on modern denominational differences is, in many ways, both an earlier and a more careful version of Bibby's argument: "in theology and ritual" denominations "differed almost as much as ever". "In parish organization", in other words their division into demographically specific sub-groups with stock programs, "they had become virtually indistinguishable". He concludes that "members valued the distinctive features of their denominations, but what most of them sought from the church had little to do with their denominational affiliation".²⁸

²⁸ Bibby, pp. 50, 61; Grant, pp. 169-70.

While Bibby does concede that believers, to some extent, may always have approached religion through fragments, he elsewhere ties his argument firmly to the theoretical mantle of industrialization and modernization. Bibby's link therefore challenges us to compare the lay-institutional interaction of the present with that of the past. As Roger O'Toole concludes his survey of the sociology of Canadian religion, we need to understand "what we were" in order to understand "what we are". Moreover, if pluralism between religious groups is the essence of consumer religion, then the roots of the latter are deep, perhaps in post Reformation dissent, perhaps even earlier in "the persistent willingness of Western men and women to find religious satisfactions apart from their state-sponsored churches".²⁹ Although both halves of this theory of contemporary consumer religion-- the content offered by churches, and the involvement offered by individuals--relate to each other, exploring the second in historical context tells us more about lay religion.

Methodism is an ideal denominational focus for this exploration of lay religion, not simply because of the important place of evangelicalism within North American social history, but also because the course of enthusiasm

²⁹ Bibby, pp. 81, 138, and 144; O'Toole, p. 91; Butler, p. 171.

over the nineteenth century necessarily involves the study of lay religion. According to Adam Smith's original model, Methodism had profited most from the the late eighteenth century religious economy. Currie, Gilbert and Horsley have also used the economic analogy to argue that Methodism exemplified the "conscious attempt to induce a demand for church membership by the supply of religious facilities".³⁰ The striking growth of Methodism in early nineteenth century Ontario reflected the denominational fluidity of this period. Even in later decades, changing patterns of total nominal Protestant adherence after 1871--with the growth of Methodists and Presbyterians, and declining proportions of Anglicans--suggest that this fluidity persisted. Although Grant and Westfall justifiably deduced the consolidation of denominational boundaries from the reduced proportion of those responding with 'no religion' to census questions in Ontario (from 17% in 1842 to only 1% in 1871), aggregate figures conceal the extent of flow between the major denominations.³¹

The shift over the nineteenth century in Methodist piety, understood in the dictionary sense as "the fulfillment of religious obligations", is the most common theme of the

³⁰ Finke and Stark, "How the Upstart Sects", p. 42; Currie et al., p. 96.

³¹ Handy p. 350; Grant, A Profusion, p. 153.

historiography of trans-Atlantic Methodism. Depending on the historian or the branch of Methodism under study, this shift has been broadly defined as the decline or transformation of three interrelated strains within Methodism: protest or radicalism, sectarianism, and enthusiasm. The first has dominated British historiography,³² but the latter two have been more prominent in the historiography of North American Methodism. H. Richard Niebuhr first linked the Anglo-American Methodist experience in The Social Sources of Denominationalism,³³ a work which strongly influenced the study of religion in Canada. Niebuhr and his successors explained this decline or transformation primarily by economic forces, in other words the interaction of Methodism and the emerging industrial capitalism of Britain, or the growth of settlement and market capitalism in eastern North America. Yet until recently, Niebuhr's work never generated an American scholarly response paralleling British historiography.³⁴

³² David Hempton summarizes the historical debate over radicalism and the changing nature of Methodism in the introductory and concluding chapters of Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750-1850 (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1984).

³³ (1929; rpt. New York City: New American Library, 1957).

³⁴ Clifford, p. 509; Robert H. Craig, "The Underside of History: American Methodism, Capitalism and Popular Struggle", Methodist History, 24:2 (January 1989), pp. 75-77.

However, S. D. Clark pursued Niebuhr's argument in relation to Canadian Methodism, and although his use of the sect to church typology and the frontier thesis has been revised by more complex explanations, Clark's work remains influential.³⁵ Other historians of Methodism have also stressed cultural forces, both internal influences such as the foreign missionary or social gospel movements, and more external influences such as romanticism, rationalism, or liberalism. In their unique study of comparative aggregate church growth in Britain, Currie, Grant and Horsley have related this shift to the general pattern of growth for any new church as it moves beyond the first progressive phase.³⁶

Like secularization theory, historical explanations of the shift in piety have a presentist momentum; indeed S. D. Clark and historians of English Methodism such as James Obelkevich have made this link.³⁷ These explanations also

³⁵ S. D. Clark's Church and Sect in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948) remains the classic exposition of his argument; Harry H. Hiller, "The Contribution of S. D. Clark to the Sociology of Canadian Religion", Studies in Religion, 6(1976-77), pp. 415-27; John S. Moir, "Sectarian Tradition in Canada", in The Churches and the Canadian Experience, ed. John Webster Grant (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1963), pp. 127-28; Mol, pp. 119-20.

³⁶ Robert Currie, Methodism Divided: A Study in the Sociology of Ecumenicalism (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), Ch. 4; Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era, pp. 61-62; Grant, A Profusion, p. 165; Westfall, pp. 69-70 and 78-80; Currie et al., pp. 69-74.

³⁷ James Obelkevich, Religion and Rural Society: South

tend to be implicitly judgemental, although their exact form depends on the outlook of the historian. Of scholars of Canadian Methodism, S. D. Clark and William Brooks viewed this shift most critically,³⁸ Goldwin French, John Webster Grant and William Westfall ambivalently,³⁹ and Neil Semple most positively.⁴⁰ This shift in the nature of enthusiasm was not exclusive to Methodism, for historians have found parallels with with the history of Canadian Baptists.⁴¹ However, because of the size of Methodism and its far greater involvement in the church union and social gospel movements, this shift within Methodism has been more

Lindsay, 1825-1875 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 327.

- ³⁸ Clark, p. 271; William Howard Brooks, "The Changing Character of Maritime Wesleyan Methodism 1855-1883", (M.A. Thesis: Mount Allison University, 1965), p. 123.
- ³⁹ French, "The People Called Methodists in Canada", in The Churches and the Canadian Experience, pp. 76- 77; Grant, Church in the Canadian Era, p. 62; Grant, A Profusion, p. 229; Westfall, pp. 206-09.
- ⁴⁰ From his Ph.D. thesis "The Impact of Urbanization on the Methodist Church in Ontario, 1854-1884", (University of Toronto, 1977), Semple has produced a number of related articles. The discussion in this and the following paragraphs draws on "Ontario's Religious Hegemony: The Creation of the National Methodist Church", Ontario History, 77(1985), pp. 19-42, and "The Transformation of Methodist Revivalism in Nineteenth-Century Ontario", in Old Ontario: Essays in Honour of J.M.S. Careless, ed. David Keane and Colin Read (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1990), pp. 95-117.
- ⁴¹ George Rawlyk, Ravished by the Spirit: Religious Revivals, Baptists, and Henry Alline (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), pp. 134-35.

prominent in the historiography of religion in Canada.

This historiography has focused on institutional transformation or the historical image conveyed by the denominational press, whether through jeremiads over the present or nostalgic recollections of a heroic past. The institutional transformation is clearest: more numerous, larger, and ornate church buildings, the professionalization of the ministry, and the expansion of the denominational structures and press. From the cultural values and the financial resources behind this transformation, the historians of Canadian Methodism cited above have followed Niebuhr in tracing a change in the social origins of Methodism. However, close study of Methodism and emerging capitalism has been confined almost entirely to Britain, where "the picture of a great discontinuity between a predominantly working-class Methodism of Wesley's day and its bourgeois successor has been considerably modified, even if the upward social mobility of mainstream Methodism is still accepted." A similar revisionism has begun in the sparser literature addressing American Methodism.⁴²

Based primarily on qualitative sources published by the denominational press, clerical debate over key elements of Methodist piety such as the class meeting as the core of

⁴² Hempton, p. 14; Craig, op. cit. and Philip L. Giles, "A Millenium Denied: Northern Methodists and Workers, 1865-1886", Methodist History, 26:1 (1987), pp. 27-43.

church membership, the revival, or adult conversion has been better researched. Yet the significance and spread of this debate are not well defined: its timing extends from the 1840s to the early twentieth century. Moreover, historians have used different measures of enthusiasm to chart different results. Brooks, Semple, and Westfall favour the mid to late nineteenth century for the decline, although studies with a longer timeframe from Fred Landon and Goldwin French suggested that many, perhaps most, Methodists retained a traditional piety until the early twentieth century, a view recently supported by Phyllis Airhart.⁴³ Furthermore, the historiography of changing Methodist piety suffers generally from the scarcity of close studies of second generation Methodism.

Although institutional developments and clerical debate are important to understanding the changing nature of Methodist piety, they tell us much less about the actual piety of those Methodists whose religious lives were documented by church and census records. Regional studies of British Methodism have stressed "the diversity of local religious behaviour".⁴⁴ By way of a historical paradox, this

⁴³ In addition to authors already cited, see Fred Landon, Western Ontario and the American Frontier, (rpt. 1941; Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), p. 263; Phyllis Airhart, "The Eclipse of Revivalist Spirituality: The Transformation of Canadian Methodist Piety 1884-1925", (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Chicago, 1985), pp. 83-84.

thesis presents a local revisionism to both secularization theory and the historiography of Canadian Methodist piety, qualifying our understanding of the extent and nature of religious commitment in the nineteenth century, while demonstrating the persistence of traditional belief and behaviour. To return to the language of Adam Smith's model, the dynamics and demography of Methodist growth in nineteenth century St. Stephen show that these numbered and renumbered souls were religious consumers in an open though not boundless religious economy. But the continuity of much of traditional Methodist piety shows that the denominational menu still carried a real spiritual price tag.

The focus on a New Brunswick community also meets several historiographical needs. Terrence Murphy has called not only for greater attention to the history of religion in the Maritime Provinces, but for a move beyond ecclesiastical history towards relating "the churches to the social development of the region".⁴⁵ Although Methodism was the largest Protestant denomination in Canada by 1881, in New Brunswick the Baptists dominated evangelicalism, and, not surprisingly, continue to dominate its historiography. Studying a New Brunswick community also balances the

⁴⁴ Hempton, p. 11.

⁴⁵ Terrence Murphy, "The Religious History of Atlantic Canada: The State of the Art", Acadiensis, 15:1(1985), pp. 152-74.

historiography of Canadian Methodism, which has tended to focus on Ontario. As the second chapter will indicate, there were regional differences in Methodist style. According to Grant, "though membership in a particular denomination ranked high as a badge of personal identity...members of the same denomination could vary greatly from province to province in social status, political outlook, and theological conviction".⁴⁶ However, there is an equal hazard in studying Methodism solely in terms of region, rather than within trans-Atlantic evangelicalism. Neil Semple's conclusion that by the 1880s Ontario Methodism, through sheer numbers, dominated Maritime Methodism with a Toronto based cultural vision is too narrow, given the sharing of British and American religious literature, journalism, and hymnology, and premature, since the regional Methodist press and newspaper did not disappear until the twentieth century.⁴⁷

The focus on Methodism in a New Brunswick community also balances the historiography of revivalism which consists of either general studies of leaders and specific revivals, or quantitative community studies of Congregational or Presbyterian churches during the Great Awakenings.⁴⁸ The

⁴⁶ Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era, p. 1.

⁴⁷ Semple, "Ontario's Religious Hegemony", p. 34.

⁴⁸ Useful summaries can be found in David Luker, "Revivalism

latter in particular relate a number of themes from North American social history to lay religion. One of the first such themes to capture general historical attention was transience, which generated a large body of literature establishing that geographic mobility was far more widespread in the nineteenth century than had been previously believed. Although historians have considered the effects of transience on other forms of social interaction, far fewer have questioned whether "modern patterns of residential mobility...have damaged the interests of settled institutions like the church" any more than in the past,⁴⁹ or if "the most mobile" were "really more prone to revivalism than others",⁵⁰ or how changes in denominational affiliation relate to "social context, and geographic

in Theory and Practice: The Case of Cornish Methodism", Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 37(1986), pp. 603-604; Bruce Tucker, "Class and Culture in Recent Anglo-American Religious Historiography: A Review Essay", Labour/Le Travailleur, 6(Autumn 1980), pp. 159-69; Leonard Sweet, "The Evangelical Tradition in America", in The Evangelical Tradition in America ed. Sweet, (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1984), pp. 1-86; and Stephen R. Grossbart, "Seeking the Divine Favour: Conversion and Church Admission in Eastern Connecticut, 1711-1832", William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series XLVI (1989), pp. 697-99.

⁴⁹ Kevin J. Christiano, "'Numbering Israel': The U.S. Census and Religious Organizations", Social Science History, 8(1984), p. 351.

⁵⁰ Paul E. Johnson, A Shopkeeper's Millenium: Society and Revivalism in Rochester, New York (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), p. 12.

mobility".⁵¹

A second body of historical literature has shown how "including women's participation" establishes both the primary importance of women's experience to religious and social life in North America and the "essential unity of these two streams of history".⁵² Historians have also begun to consider adult baptism or church membership as demographic events within the life course.⁵³ Daniel Blake Smith has lamented the division within North American family history between the demographic and the psychosocial approaches, with only the latter related to religion, and that by way of Puritanism. This thesis will combine these approaches and relate "the functions of kin, religious experience, and attitudes towards death". In short, the denominational and community focus make it possible to respond to the call for greater research into the role of

⁵¹ Robert W. Doherty, "Sociology, Religion, and Historians", Historical Methods Newsletter, 6(1973), p. 168.

⁵² Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller, Introd. to Women and Religion in America: The Nineteenth Century (New York: Harper and Row, 1981), p. ix. Canadian women's history has only recently begun to draw more on religious themes, but so far mainly for Catholic women's orders or late nineteenth and early twentieth century Protestants involved in missions, education, or voluntary associations.

⁵³ Daniel Scott Smith, "A Perspective on Demographic Methods and Effects in Social History", William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series XXXIX (1982), p. 446.

women and the family in Methodism.⁵⁴

Although determined by the availability of census data on religion, the time period of the 1860s and 1870s also coincided with the unification of Canadian Methodism. Both the time period and community type balance the chronology and geography of nineteenth century revivalism, which has been most studied in New England towns during the Second Great Awakening or the urban revivals at the end of the century. The parish of St. Stephen was chosen because of its size and social diversity. Outside the city of Saint John, the St. Croix River from St. Andrews to St. Stephen bordered the largest concentrations of villages and settlements in the province by the middle of the century.⁵⁵ Although denominationally diverse, St. Stephen included two old and relatively strong Methodist 'circuits', clusters of class meetings and congregations served by the same minister for between one and three years. Finally, the research was very fortunately grounded in the secondary sources available on the parish's history.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Daniel Blake Smith, "The Study of the Family in Early America: Trends, Problems, and Prospects", William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series XXXIX (1982), p. 21; Hempton, p. 13.

⁵⁵ Graeme Wynn, Timber Colony: A Historical Geography of Early Nineteenth Century New Brunswick (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 150.

⁵⁶ Particularly T. W. Acheson's M.A. thesis "Denominationalism in a Loyalist County: A Social History

Using the community study approach within a M.A. thesis has set limits on the subjects and lines of investigation, and precluded an interdisciplinary theoretical framework. Of the layers of Methodist affiliation described earlier, four are the key subjects of this study: adult baptism, church membership, lay leadership, and adherence according to the 1861 or 1871 census. Other forms of denominational affiliation such as pew renting, congregational attendance, or subscriptions to the denominational paper can only tentatively be touched on; the remainder must remain outside this study. The four chosen have the merit of being systematic and significant. The first three referred to identifiable patterns of behaviour or involvement. Judging from enumerators' instructions and the variety of religious groups represented both within families and the parish itself, the fourth involved some form of self-definition, however nominal.

The lines of investigation for this study are confined to only part of the intricate social situation of a nineteenth century Methodist. While census data and church records proved rich sources, by themselves they could not sustain a thorough study of lay religion in relation to all aspects of

of Charlotte County, N. B.", University of New Brunswick, 1964; Harold A. Davis, An International Community on the St. Croix 1604-1930 (1950; rpt. Orono: University of Maine, 1930).

this situation, whether geographic, demographic, economic, associational or cultural. The geographic and demographic investigation are thus limited to questions answerable within census data, and economic context and social class remain only recurring and speculative subthemes. The associational ties of Methodists whether political, recreational, or circumstantial can only be acknowledged along with the worlds of secular culture or material life.

Although much of the historiography cited in this thesis draws on anthropological literature, this interdisciplinary approach is better suited to comparative history than to this thesis. Indeed, that historians of the North American experience turned to anthropology to justify church history and to discover that religion was made up of symbol, ritual, and community shows how marginal the subject had become to their discipline. This study also strives to distinguish the answers to the historical question-- why individuals were religious in a particular way--from the answers to the anthropological, indeed metaphysical, question of why individuals are religious. In other words, it is not enough to explain revivalism in a voluntarist church solely in terms of anomie or distress, if elsewhere in the same community Anglicans or Catholics in similar social situations are swelling or emptying their churches.

The study of lay religion must also bridge the methodological extremes of social history and church history. The substantive cultural content of religion--whether emotional, ideational, ritual, or aesthetic--must be neither ignored nor ontologized away from the people who used or created this cultural content. Thus, the nature of lay religion is best revealed by both the traditional qualitative sources for church history and those sources amenable to quantitative analysis. Of the former, church records, contemporary Methodist literature published or available in the Maritimes, and two weekly newspapers are the main types of sources. The minutes of denominational meetings at various regional levels reveal clerical ideals and laments, although the journals, when available, are better indicators of real debate.⁵⁷ Where possible, the Methodist literature cited was written by ministers active in the region during these decades, and, in a few cases, by ministers who had been or would be stationed in St. Stephen.

The regional Methodist paper, The Provincial Wesleyan, provides a better indication of Methodist ideas and practice, by giving a published voice to the laity and broader hints as to the degree of debate. The Book Room

⁵⁷ Published records are available in a number of locations; unpublished records are held in Halifax at the Maritime Conference Archives of the United Church of Canada (henceforth MCA).

Steward and a contributing editor compiled the weekly mainly from other newspapers, but included local news and contributions. Its circulation for the whole region appears to have remained roughly 3,000 in this period,⁵⁸ and at least 90 families in St. Stephen and Milltown subscribed between 1859 and 1881, sometimes only for a few months, some for several years. Its actual local circulation was probably larger, since families may have shared papers, and the records are not complete.⁵⁹ The Wesleyan also contains 50 obituaries or 'spiritual histories' of local Methodists or their relations. The only surviving community paper, The St. Croix Courier, commenced in 1865 and is complete for most of this period.

⁵⁸ TPW, 4 December 1856, p. 2 col. 2; 3 November 1873, p. 2 col. 1; In 1866 the editor complained that one half of the Methodist families of "these provinces...well able to patronize our Journal do not". He probably excluded Newfoundland and Bermuda from this calculation: In 1866, the conference reported 12,422 families at public worship, of whom 8,982 belonged to circuits in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. The editors recognized that \$1 a year was prohibitive for some, and later asked for contributions to a fund for the support of subscriptions to "families in indigent circumstances" (TPW, 20 January 1866, p. 2 col. 1; 16 January 1867, p. 3 col. 3).

⁵⁹ The names of local ministers and the number or names of the subscriptions they reported can be found on the penultimate or last pages of the paper, but unfortunately not consistently for each circuit or year.

This study's quantitative database is made up of two groups: individuals listed in church records and individuals listed in census returns. As in most of New Brunswick, the two 'circuits' of members and congregations within the parish of St. Stephen were Wesleyan Methodist. The St. Stephen and Milltown circuit records list 789 individuals whose names appeared on class meeting lists between 1860 and 1881 (in both circuits, new ministers began their local itinerancies in the summer of 1859, with their first membership records in 1860), 82 lay leaders, and 122 adult baptisms between 1835 and 1881.⁶⁰ Unfortunately, records of lay leadership and adult baptisms are not complete; the former, located in minutes of trustee and board meetings, are missing several years, and the latter include 12 adults baptized in 1869 whose names were not recorded. Fortunately, membership records for voluntarist churches are among the better indicators of church involvement. Membership required some kind of individual decision, and any local temptation to exaggerate memberships was tempered by the financial demands made by the denomination on a church according to its size.⁶¹ Moreover, circuit lists of full and trial members for Methodism in St.

⁶⁰ Local Methodist church records exist on microfilm at the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick (henceforth PANB).

⁶¹ Currie et al., pp. 15-20; Christiano, p. 350.

Stephen document a specific religious behaviour: sporadic or regular attendance at the 'class meeting', whose nature will be elaborated in the next chapter.

The extensive revision of membership records from the St. Stephen and Milltown circuits⁶² in the late 1850s confirms the contemporary belief that, despite occasional complaints from new clergy about their predecessors, the Conference's membership records after 1855 were better kept and referred to the number actually meeting in class. However, some alleged that ministers in poorer or less generous circuits underestimated the number of members because a circuit's contribution to a particular Conference fund was calculated from these totals.⁶³ Ministers also indicated and counted as full members individuals who were too sick or too old to attend; this may, however, have reflected the insistence of the individuals themselves, as there are other instances of elderly members whose names disappeared from the records a few years before their deaths.

⁶² henceforth SSMR and MTMR.

⁶³ Journal, EBAC, 1860, 1863; Minutes of the Saint John District Meeting (henceforth SJDM), 1860, 1863, MCA; T. W. Smith, Volume 2 of History of Methodism in Eastern British America (Halifax: Methodist Book Room, 1890), p. 470; TPW, 3 June 1876, p. 182 cols. 1-2 (in 1876, TPW numbered pages consecutively throughout the year); 14 November 1860, p. 2 col. 3; 12 September 1866, p. 2 col. 1;

The database constructed from these records indicates which class meeting members belonged to, who had been members in 1850-51 (the earliest year for which both circuits' lists are available, the first year for those who joined in the 1850s, and the reason, if known, for their removal from the records. The records clearly indicate new members, but only approximate the total active members in any given year, since a few years are missing,⁶⁴ and the period of grace for those who stopped attending the class meeting was sometimes as high as two years before their names were struck off.⁶⁵ However, for both spiritual and financial reasons some ministers were also reluctant to count as members every new person attending class or to turn trial members into full members.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Each new minister wrote up a new list, and some revised them annually. From these lists and from published figures for total membership, deaths, and those who had ceased their membership or left the circuit, it was possible to enter data for all years between 1860 and 1881 except 1862, 1878, and 1881 in the St. Stephen circuit, and 1868, 1871, and 1872 in Milltown.

⁶⁵ For example, at the end of the conference year 1859/60, the minister in Milltown noted which members had ceased to attend class, counted them in the circuit total for that year, but dropped them by 1861.

⁶⁶ In 1859, Milltown records listed 130 full or trial members, but the minister "only returned 120"; in 1874, the St. Stephen minister attempted to return 160 full and 12 on trial members, but the district allowed only 140 full members. According to the unpublished conference Journal, disappointment at the membership growth of the Conference in 1869/70 led some ministers to propose formulas to turn trial members into full members, but

The larger portion of the database consists of parish census data for most of the parish's 5,160 residents in 1861 and 6,515 in 1871: all individuals who were ever a Methodist member, adherent, lay leader, or adult baptism; for 1861, other members of the households in which these individuals lived; all household heads; and for 1871 only, individuals over the age of seven from all religious groups. In theory, enumerators in both 1861 and 1871 recorded individuals at their usual place of residence, thus excluding "foreigners", and also "travellers", who were supposedly enumerated by their families.⁶⁷ Except for this requirement of enumerating individuals at their usual residence, the census was intended to represent the province as it was on the census day. The time taken to enumerate districts for the 1861 census, officially dated August 15, ranged from two weeks to five months. The 1861 enumerators were required to visit each house, and personally record the inhabitants' own answers to the various questions. In 1871,

these proposals were all defeated; however, district superintendents were authorized to consult with each minister about members on a case by case basis and, in the end, turned 83 members on trial into full members.

⁶⁷ Alan A. Brookes, "'Doing the Best I Can': The Taking of the 1861 New Brunswick Census", Histoire Sociale/Social History (May 1976), pp. 70-91; Census of Canada, 1870-71, Volume 1 (Ottawa: I. B. Taylor, 1873), p. xii; J. C. Tache, The Canadian Census of 1871, p. 2; Arthur Harvey, "The Canadian Census of 1871", Canadian Monthly and National Review, February 1872, p. 94.

enumerators

went through a series of oral instructions....
Each officer was, besides, furnished with a manual of direction and with a specimen schedule, indicating the manner in which every entry was to be made.

The Manual stressed that information on religion, ethnicity, and occupation was to be recorded as given by the respondent. To assist inhabitants in understanding what was expected of them, copies of the census schedules were distributed in each area in advance. The section of the 1861 census used for this project listed an individual's sex, age, relationship to household head, birthplace, religion, and occupation. The 1871 census numbered separate dwellings as well as separate households, and added questions on ethnicity, marital status, and education. It was possible to infer marital status in 1861 for most individuals, and for 1871 a variable was created identifying married couples, groups of individuals with the same last names, and age relationships within these groups.⁶⁸

The problem of underenumeration must be recognized, although it was more severe in cities than in small towns or rural areas.⁶⁹ One of the three enumerators for the parish

⁶⁸ Census of Canada, 1870-71, Volume 1, p. xii, xxii; Department of Agriculture, Manual Manual Containing 'The Census Act' and The Instructions To The Officers Employed in the Taking of the First Census of Canada (1871) (Ottawa: Printed by Brown Chamberlin, 1871), pp. 22-23.

⁶⁹ John B. Sharpless and Ray M. Shortridge, "Biased

of St. Stephen in 1871 dealt with this by adding names at the end of a Schedule without the usual dwelling and household numbers. The linkage and comparison of sources for this project suggest that underenumeration was less and less a problem with each St. Stephen census between 1851 and 1871. Moreover, the overall argument is only strengthened by the possibility of a larger constituency of Methodist adherents who could have but did not become members. The opposite problem of duplication can be easily identified: although two Methodist families and at least two boarders were enumerated twice in the 1861 St. Stephen census, only three Methodists were enumerated twice in 1871.⁷⁰ At least one family in St. Stephen in 1871 was enumerated in two different parishes of the county in 1851. The chief weakness occurs in a waterdamaged section of the 1861 returns for the village of Milltown. Happily, the column on religion escaped, and only three Methodist families included illegible listings; however, the linkage to 1871 of 1861 household heads and future Methodists is underestimated.

Underenumeration in Census Manuscripts", Journal of Urban History (1975), pp. 409-35. Tache, The Canadian Census of 1871, pp. 1-5; Arthur Harvey, pp. 97-99.

⁷⁰ One of these was only detectable because marriage records identified her as both the oldest daughter of a family and a wife in another household.

Linked by hand, these church and census records were clarified and supplemented by information on origin from the 1851 county census,⁷¹ and on location within the parish from several sources.⁷² The records of the St. Stephen Rural Cemetery from 1856 to 1881⁷³ also provided information on origin, marital status, place of residence, and year of death for many Methodists. Since a majority of church members were women, the perennial problem of tracing wives and widows was tackled through the membership records themselves, extant Methodist marriage records between 1851 and 1881, the St. Croix Courier, and family histories.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Robert F. Fellows, ed. The New Brunswick Census of 1851: Charlotte County, New Brunswick, Canada (Fredericton, N.B.: Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, 1975).

⁷² Map of St. Stephen and Calais from an Actual Survey by O. S. Osborn, (Philadelphia, E. M. Woodford, 1856), PANB; Hutchinson's New Brunswick Directory for 1865-66 (Saint John: T. Hutchinson, 1865); Hutchinson's New Brunswick Directory for 1867-68 (Saint John: James A. T. Bird, 1867); Lovell's Province of New Brunswick Directory for 1871 (Montreal: John Lovell, 1871). The most recent study of Canadian directories from this period is Gareth Shaw, "Nineteenth Century Directories as Sources in Canadian Social History", Archivaria, (Summer 1982), pp. 107-21.

⁷³ Henceforth SSRC, these records are on microfilm at PANB.

⁷⁴ County marriage records and marriage bonds were consulted only for specific individuals. For family histories, see I. C. Knowlton, Annals of Calais, Maine and St. Stephen, New Brunswick (1875; rpt. St. Stephen: Print'N'Press); Rebecca Nichol, Hannahs of the St. Croix (Hartland, N. B.: Eagle Printing Ltd., 1984); William Todd, Todds of the St. Croix Valley (privately printed at Mount Carmel, 1943); D. M. L. Dougherty, A History of Getchell Settlement-Mayfield (privately printed c. 1988); Charles

The variety of sources used and linked made it possible to identify errors, inconsistencies, and anomalies in the data. In the case of major age discrepancies when three sources were available, the two with the most reasonable age difference were assumed to be correct. After this correction, 85% of deviations between the 1861 and 1871 ages of linked individuals were between 8 and 12 years. This compares very favourably with deviations found between Saguenay census returns.⁷⁵ In comparing information on birthplace, a predictable confusion between United States and New Brunswick birthplaces appeared, a natural result of the relatively fluid cross-border traffic of the time. The only other repeated discrepancy occurred among British immigrants or their children, particularly the Irish, over their birthplace. For the most part, a person's ethnicity, although self-defined according to the census Manual,

T. Libby, The Libby Family in America (Portland, Maine: B. Thurston & Co., 1882); Hanson Family history (Elmer and Alice Hanson Collection), PANB; Getchell Family history (Mrs. Marion Getchell Collection), PANB; Hill/Grimmer Family history (Phil Grimmer Scrapbook), PANB; Tobin Family History, private possession of Graeme F. Somerville, Saint John, N.B. The series "Early Days on the St. Croix" written by George Boardman and published between October 1895 and May 1896 in the Courier was also helpful.

⁷⁵ Christian Pouyez, Raymond Roy, and Francois Martin, "The Linkage of Census Name Data: Problems and Procedures", Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 14:1 (Summer 1983), pp. 129-52 summarizes the extensive literature on record linkage.

appears to have been determined by the father's origin or birthplace. However, a check for consistency in ethnicity in 1871 among siblings from the same 1851 family uncovered 21 families with variations.

Despite their limitations the data gathered by Methodists and enumerators remain immensely valuable sources. Combined, they can extend church history "from pulpit to pew and from pew to countryside".⁷⁶ The chapters that follow form three sections of this thesis. The first part sets the stage for the remainder: Chapter Two deals with Methodist belief and worship, Chapter Three with polity and place in local Methodism. The second part explores the dynamics of church growth--with chapters on transience, revivalism, and proselytism--and the third part its demography--with chapters on the family, youth, and gender. The thesis concludes with that ultimate theme of Methodist piety: holy dying and the ideal of community.

The dynamics and demography of Methodist growth will show that many features of contemporary Protestantism predate this century: associational fluidity both between Methodism and other religious groups and within Methodism itself; a large but nominal adherence; a smaller congregation; an even smaller church membership with a high turnover; and an understaffed and often independent lay leadership. Although

⁷⁶ Butler, p. 173.

church growth took place within a trans-Atlantic evangelical culture, it was ultimately local--involving the immediate circumstances of place, church, or family, and affected by transience, revivalism, and proselytism. Although the process of Methodist growth was tribalistic, the results show the limits of tribalism. In contrast with the evangelical ideology of Christian nurture and the united family, relatively few Methodist families extended their denominational unity beyond adherence to church membership, and many were divided in adherence. Church membership was neither a prescribed nor socially timed rite of passage, but the experience of a minority. Although both married women and men were more likely to join the church than the single, women--the majority of church members--joined at all stages of the life course, while most male members joined after marriage. For women, more often the earliest church members of a family or its sole representatives, Methodism offered unique opportunities of leadership, voice, and community. Yet despite organizational changes during the 1860s and 1870s and perennial declension, traditional piety persisted within the Methodist churches of St. Stephen, in the form of the conversion experience, the class meeting, the revival, adult baptism or church membership, and holy dying.

Chapter II

'The Second-Hand Religious Life':

Belief and Worship in Regional Methodism

Although William James began his classic on religious experience by dismissing any profit from the study of 'the second-hand religious life', his conclusion was soon belied by his own work. James analyzed not just the writings of such "pattern-setters" for Maritime evangelicalism as John Wesley or Henry Alline, but also the profiles of late nineteenth century American Methodists compiled by psychologist E. D. Starbuck. Nevertheless, James's definition of 'ordinary' lay religion is partly relevant to its historical recovery: as represented in surviving denominational sources, it often seems "made...by others, communicated...by tradition, determined to fixed forms by imitation, and retained by habit".¹ Yet this is also unfair to past believers; although their inward personalization of denominational tradition is undocumented, their alteration of forms even in the process of imitation and their changing

¹ William James, The Variety of Religious Experience, introd. Jacques Barzun (New York: Mentor Books, 1958), p. 28.

habits are the 'stuff' of church history.

The exploration of Methodist belief and worship in this chapter and that of Methodist polity in the next must therefore integrate three kinds of cultural expression within this 'second-hand religious life': the original Wesleyan model, its reformulation in regional denominational records and print culture, and its local character as revealed through church records, spiritual histories, or revival accounts, sometimes with stereotyped language, occasionally with an original voice. The latter sources are particularly important, because tracing the course of traditional Methodist piety requires some sense of what that tradition was for the founders of local churches, not just the ideal Wesleyan original of the mid-eighteenth century. Despite their organizational subservience within clerical polity, Methodist communities could maintain a local flavour or an independent character.² In St. Stephen, Methodism reflected the long and distinctive ministry of its founder Duncan McColl. A former British soldier, McColl held the first Methodist meetings in November 1785, a year before the organization of St. Stephen into one of six parishes in Charlotte County. Refusing to itinerate beyond the St. John river valley and, in later years, outside Charlotte County,

² Currie, Methodism Divided, p. 53; Luker, p. 610.

McColl remained based in St. Stephen until his death in 1829.³

Relating the classic Wesleyan text--the Doctrine and Discipline of the Methodist Church--which included John Wesley's original sections and the "General Rules"⁴ to local Methodism demonstrates the intermingling of these three kinds of cultural expressions. Wesley had compiled the first edition for the American Methodists, with whom McColl was ordained. But although McColl kept class meetings by admission only and read the General Rules to his congregation, he resisted Wesleyan Sunday schools and financial practice, supporting himself from his own resources and eventually a denominational pension.⁵ This kind of resistance from both independent clergy and lay

³ T. W. Acheson, "Duncan M'Coll", Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VI, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), pp. 429-32.

⁴ Compare "Doctrines and Discipline in the Minutes of the Conferences, 1740-47" and "Rules for a Preacher's Conduct", in John Wesley, ed. Albert C. Outler (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 177-80, 145-46, and Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America (Philadelphia: Parry Hall, 1792), pp. 6-14, with Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church of Canada (Halifax: A. W. Nicholson, 1874), pp. 1-8, 9-12, 22-25, and 58. The only significant revisions of the General Rules in the early period were an added emphasis on family prayer, and a new clause prohibiting slavery.

⁵ Acheson, "M'Coll", p. 430; British North American Wesleyan Methodist Magazine (henceforth BNAWMM), November 1841, p. 574; McColl's resistance to Sunday schools has been deduced from their commencement in the year he retired from active ministry.

leaders, particularly over the issuing of membership tickets and the expectation that members who could afford to support the church should do so, was common throughout this period, and in England an underlying cause of future schisms.⁶ This resistance also occurred in British North America, and has been mistakenly portrayed as a colonial/English conflict rather than the more perennial conflict of local and lay versus center and clerical.⁷ McColl's first successor, described by a later writer as excessively "literal" in his "interpretation of Methodist law and usage", not surprisingly encountered difficulties introducing the Discipline in St. Stephen.⁸ Yet later clergy claimed that the Discipline was not really introduced in the Maritime Provinces until after the union of 1855, and then with "some sense of constraint".⁹

⁶ Currie, Methodism Divided, p. 30; Julia Stewart Werner, The Primitive Methodist Experience: Its Background and Early History (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), p. 11.

⁷ Goldwin French, Parsons and Politics: The Role of the Wesleyan Methodists in Upper Canada and the Maritimes from 1780 to 1855 (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1962), pp. 56-57, 63-66.

⁸ T. Watson Smith, History of Methodism in Eastern British North America (Halifax: Methodist Book Room, 1877), Vol. II, pp. 283-84 and 355; Reports of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (henceforth (RWMMS)), 1831, p. 106.

⁹ John Lathern, "A Historical Sketch of Methodism in the Eastern Provinces", in Centennial of Canadian Methodism (Toronto: William Briggs, 1891), p. 49; TPW, 15 September 1877, p. 5 col. 1.

Until the union of the Wesleyan Conferences and the New Connexion in 1874, Wesleyan Methodists in British North America theoretically used the English Conference's edition of the Discipline.¹⁰ However, one minister blamed the problems of Methodism in New Brunswick on the scarcity of denominational literature, and a former St. Stephen minister complained in 1869 of the unavailability of a denominational handbook within the region.¹¹ The first Canadian edition (1874) of the Discipline was revised after each General Conference, for, as one minister commented, there were sections which among Wesleyan Methodists in Canada had "no more force...than the injunctions of the Koran". Despite these changes, the General Rules, articles of religion, and doctrinal standards remained sacrosanct. The act of union prohibited the General Conference from altering or revoking these sections; after 1882, the Rules could be revised only by a constitutional vote.¹² This debate may never have been felt much at the local level, although ministers--the local agents of the Book Room--were instructed to give copies of

¹⁰ Unfortunately, this mid-century edition was not available to the author.

¹¹ TPW, 29 September 1860, p. 2 cols. 4-5; 5 May 1869, p. 2 col. 2.

¹² TPW, 3 March 1877, p. 4 cols. 1-3; Journals of the Proceedings of the General Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Canada (henceforth JPGC), 1882, p. 22.

the General Rules to members on trial and to read both the Rules and the Pastoral Addresses from regional and national conferences to their congregations.¹³ In theory, members received their own copies of the "General Rules"; there were insufficient copies in the early decades, but in St. Stephen the practice appears to have been well established by the 1880s, and probably earlier.¹⁴ Given the intermingling of Wesleyan, regional, and local tradition, and the scarcity of literary sources concerning individual lay Methodists, any description of Methodist belief and worship must be necessarily tentative and approximate. This chapter examines the key themes of this belief--conversion and holiness, and their pursuit through ritual and revival within Methodist worship.

Particularly for lay Methodists, religious experience was the most important part of Methodist belief. According to George Huestis, there was little insistence on determining the precise "doctrinal views" of new members, unlike the more rigorous requirements for ministry candidates.¹⁵ In a smaller and later handbook for new members, Robert Wilson

¹³ Discipline (1874), p. 47; TPW, 16 July 1873, p. 3 col. 4.

¹⁴ Minutes, New Brunswick District Meeting (henceforth NBDM), 1834; TPW, 16 March 1883, p. 6 cols. 2-3.

¹⁵ George O. Huestis, A Manual of Methodism: Being an Outline of Its History, Doctrines and Discipline (Toronto: William Briggs, 1885), p. 178.

wrote that although all "Divine truth" was of "equal authority", all was not equally "useful" in leading to conversion and holiness.¹⁶ Edwin Evans, a St. Stephen minister in the 1870s, argued that the preeminency of religious experience over formal theology had protected Methodism from both the "metaphysical subtleties, overdrawn niceties, and unscriptural additions" to the Christian faith over the millenia and the other extreme, the dangerous plunge into doubt. Methodist theology was simply "an orderly arrangement of our unconscious knowledge. We preach what we have known with a certitude that no mere theoretical belief can give."¹⁷ Another St. Stephen minister, Howard Sprague, closed an 1883 lecture by reminding his listeners that all theological speculation must end in the "personal and the practical", in conversion.¹⁸

Sprague's theological journey over his lifetime shows how the subordination of doctrine to experience may partly explain how Methodist ecumenism could overcome sectarianism.

¹⁶ Robert Wilson, The Doctrines, Institutions and Usages of the Methodist Church (Saint John: Press of the Sun Printing Company Ltd., 1893), p. 6.

¹⁷ Edwin Evans, Ordination Charge Delivered by the Rev. E. Evans at Moncton, N.B. (Halifax: New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island Conference, 1881), p. 16.

¹⁸ Howard Sprague, St Paul's Doctrine of the Atonement, Being the Fourth Annual Lecture and Sermon for the Theological Union of Mount Allison Wesleyan College (Saint John: J & A. McMillan, 1883), pp. 55-56.

Preaching as a young minister in St. Stephen, Sprague had attacked "Liberal Christianity" foremost because it did "nothing to evangelize the world...or to advance the cause of Christ". Although Sprague early acquired the reputation as a "great preacher", he declared that "eloquence shall be powerless unless Christ crucified shall be the burden of the preacher's message; for salvation is man's first, last and deepest want." Yet Sprague, who became Dean of theology at Mount Allison in 1908, would be remembered as a liberal theologian. In a 1901 sermon, he stated "that at the judgment day he would rather be a Unitarian--and thus a non-believer in the miracles and the resurrection--who had striven to live a Christ-like life than an orthodox Methodist who had not."¹⁹ If the primacy of experience had protected Evans from doubt but left him firmly traditional, it had also protected Sprague from doubt while leading him to liberal theology. As Michael Gauvreau has argued, it smoothed the Methodist passage through the throes of the new biblical criticism.²⁰ Moreover, this primacy of experience

¹⁹ TPW, 12 October 1870, p. 1 col. 6; Minutes, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island Conference of the Methodist Church of Canada (henceforth NBPEIC), 1917, pp. 22-24; John Reid, Vol. 1 of Mount Allison University: A History to 1963 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), pp. 224-24, 271-72.

²⁰ Michael Gauvreau, "The Taming of History: Reflections on the Canadian Methodist Encounter with Biblical Criticism 1830-1900", Canadian Historical Review, (1984), 315-46.

over doctrine may also explain in part the ease--as Chapter Six will elaborate--with which Methodism both gathered and supplied adherents of other denominations.

According to Robert Wilson, Methodist theology by the late nineteenth century was "in substantial agreement" with that of other evangelical churches, but distinctive in its combined emphasis on "Human Depravity, the Universality of the Atonement, Repentance and Faith, Conscious Salvation, and Holiness of Heart and Life". In essential continuity with early Methodism, Wilson's list encompassed both the doctrinal basis and the stages of conversion. Writing in the context of New Light enthusiasm, Duncan McColl had written that although "remarkable things had been seen, heard, and felt", he "would rather hear people speak of their conviction of sin, repentance, faith and holiness".²¹ Although Methodism set conversion within a "charismatic context", Jerald C. Brauer's conclusion that Methodism removed conversion from a doctrinal context is misleading. Methodist writers set conversion in the context of "free theology".²²

²¹ Wilson, Doctrines, p. 6; BNAWMM, May 1842, p. 163.

²² Jerald C. Brauer, "Conversion: From Puritanism to Revivalism", Journal of Religion, (1978), pp. 233 and 240-43; Evans, Ordination Charge, p. 14.

Free theology--the "privilege" of a free response to the sinfulness and "danger" of the human condition--was by no means liberal theology. Edwin Evans stressed that Methodist preachers must proclaim both God's "severity" and "goodness", but argued that the unorthodox "revolt against the doctrine of future punishment" was partly due to "harsh and injudicious" preaching. Ministers should not threaten but plead with their audiences with the "great tenderness...characteristic of the best style of Methodist preaching".²³ The "privilege" was the universal possibility and potential for conversion and "saving faith". Methodists defended their Arminian interpretation of the Atonement of Christ for all humanity as that of the early church. In Methodism, the traditional Protestant belief in faith as the only condition of salvation was reexpressed in a theology of divine grace as paradoxically bestowing free will on believers but necessitating their cooperation.²⁴

²³ Evans, Ordination Charge, pp. 13-14 and 21; A fine local example of this style of preaching--emotional and rhetorical, but by no means ranting--can be found in the watchnight sermon given in the St. Andrews church by C. B. Pitblado and published in TPW, 3 January 1872, p. 1 cols. 1-3.

²⁴ George O. Huestis, pp. 143 and 161-63; See also the series of "Doctrinal Sketches" published between January and December 1871 in the Wesleyan, by "C. S.", presumably Charles Stewart, who held the Chair of Theology at Mount Allison; see E. Arthur Betts, Bishop Black and His Preachers (Sackville, N.B., Tribune Press, 1976), p. 158.

Surviving spiritual histories from obituaries of St. Stephen Methodists between 1851 and 1881 refer to conversions from the 1790s to the 1870s; therefore, their greatest bias is that most describe either those who died of old age and had converted well before the 1850s or those who died young, which surely coloured their or their memorializers' perceptions of religious experience, even if they had converted before their illness.²⁵ These conversion accounts illustrate the ideal stages of conversion:

A preparatory process, the awakening of the soul to thoughtfulness, the conviction of sin...the consent of the will to be saved, the earnest cry to God for mercy, and the exercise of confidence in the merits and love of Jesus.²⁶

However, local Methodist conversion accounts are much briefer than their eighteenth century Puritan prototypes, and rarely referred to a sense of intellectual alienation from God, as opposed to sinfulness.

The length of the expected psychological stages of conversion thus reflected individual experience rather than a metaphysical plan. The entire process could take several weeks or even years. Although conversion accounts of Methodist clergy remained in a chronological framework until the early twentieth century,²⁷ even some pioneer lay

²⁵ Obituaries from the 1850s are included because their testimony was intended for survivors and because their families included future members or adherents.

²⁶ TPW, 21 April 1869, p. 2 cols. 2-3.

Methodists could not point at all to any one moment of change or crisis.²⁸ James Albee, a surveyor and Justice of the Peace, had joined the Methodist church during the McColl years. Although the "subject of religious impressions at a very early period":

The great work of his conversion was accomplished by such a gradual and uniform process, that he never could, with absolute certainty, say in what place, or at what time, the blessed change was wrought in his soul.²⁹

Thomas Hannah withdrew "from his old companions in sin..and continued in earnest supplications...till its pleased God to speak peace to his soul". Sarah Robinson joined the church as a young woman, but did not complete her conversion until after her marriage.³⁰

Yet other accounts suggest that what distinguished traditional lay conversions from those of the 1870s was not the length of conversion or the context of Christian nurture, but a temporally and theologically explicit crisis involving the "conviction of sin", although this may have

²⁷ Airhart, pp. 245-46.

²⁸ For clarity, I will list the name of the convert, although obituaries were seldom published under these titles; for brevity, I will give the full reference only at the first citation

²⁹ "James Albee", TPW, 19 April 1855, p. 2 col. 1. See also, "Susan Alward", TPW, 24 May 1855, p. 2 col.3.

³⁰ "Thomas Hannah", TPW, 15 February 1855, p. 2 col. 4; See also, "Sarah Robinson", 13 February 1861, p. 2 cols. 3-4; "Ann Jane Robinson", 24 February 1853, p. 2 col. 1.

reflected the language of either writer or believer. Sarah Savage who joined in 1831 "saw herself to be ...a poor helpless sinner"; in a revival at the Ledge in 1833, Thomas Hannah "felt himself a guilty, hell deserving sinner". William Mitchell, a McColl convert, had been "brought to a deep conviction of his depravity and guilt before God". In the same decade, Sarah Robinson had been "awakened to a sense of her guilt and danger". The latest such conversion occurred in 1859, when her youngest sister-in-law Rebecca Robinson Cleland joined the church shortly after her marriage. She "sought peace with God under a sense of alienation from Him by natural depravity and personal opposition to His Will".³¹

James Albee's account and those from later obituaries confirm the Wesleyan's admission that many, perhaps most, converts were churchgoers or those raised in 'Christian nurture' whose psychological state or personal lifestyle had not yet been fully transformed. Before she felt "the change of heart" in 1861, Celia Smith, a minister's daughter, had always been "moral" and "loving".³² Methodist clergy

³¹ "Sarah Savage", TPW, 19 April 1855, p. 2 col. 2; "William Mitchell", 15 February 1855, p. 2 col. 4; "Mrs. Robert Cleland", 28 November 1874, p. 1 col. 2; "Robert Hitchings", 8 July 1858, p. 1 col. 7; "Richard Barter", 30 January 1867, p. 2 cols. 1-2; "Mary Young", 27 January 1853, p. 2 col. 2.

³² TPW, 21 April 1869, p. 2 cols. 2-3; "Celia Smith", 10 September 1862, p. 2 col. 1.

reexpressed the traditional Christian theme of the faithful as the "children of God" as the doctrine and spirit of "adoption", the recognition of this transformation of those raised in Christian nurture. The memorializer of Annie McCool, the daughter of two Methodist church members, described her as a "child of God". In 1872 at the age of 17, "the spirit of adoption assured her of this gracious relation".³³

The combined reemphasis on both personality and proximity over deity and distance was characteristic of evangelical religious experience. The individual conscience intimately testified to "the personality of God".³⁴ In local conversion accounts, God did not find St. Stephen Methodists as 'He' might have their Calvinist ancestors. Rather they "found the Lord", sometimes seeking or fleeing "to the only refuge" from emotional or physical distress.³⁵ Some were "brought to God" by the class meeting, a revival, or a "Christian friend". Thomas Hannah recollected a candle placed before him which showed him "that the ministers present, and the

³³ George O. Huestis, pp. 147-48; "Annie McCool", TPW, 28 November 1874, p. 1 col. 4.

³⁴ Richard Rabinowitz, The Spiritual Self in Everyday Life: The Transformation of Religious Experience in Nineteenth Century New England (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1989), p. 217; Sprague, pp. 27 and 45.

³⁵ "Mary Pulk Williams", 3 April 1872, p. 4 col. 3; See also, "Sarah Savage".

congregation...must have become acquainted with his wretched and miserable condition, exhibited by his sorrowful and dejected countenance".³⁶ Three men speaking of conversions separated by forty years were awakened during revivals, but "found the Lord" while in the woods, echoing male Puritan conversion accounts.³⁷

The importance of the "consent of the will to be saved" and the "exercise of confidence" reflects the shift within much of evangelical religious experience over the nineteenth century: from metaphysics to psychology, from the "cognitive faculties" to the "volitional" and "affective". "Saving faith" was "an exercise of the mind...A belief of the truth, and trust in the blood of Christ".³⁸ Only after her marriage was Sarah Robinson "enabled to believe...and to testify..that the blood of Christ was able to purify the heart" (emphasis added). For some years prior to his conversion, Thomas Hannah had reportedly "seen and felt the necessity of becoming decided on this important subject". As a class and prayer meeting leader, "Salvation by the

³⁶ "Maria Parkin", TPW, 30 January 1867, p. 2 col. 1; "Frances Miller", 2 September 1876, p. 282 cols. 4-5.

³⁷ Brauer, p. 233; In addition to obituaries cited earlier, "Stephen Hill", 19 November 1857, p. 2 col. 2: "Samuel Hall", TPW, 3 February 1864, p. 1 col. 7.

³⁸ Rabinowitz, p. 218; George O. Huestis, p. 151; See also TPW, 9 August 1871, p. 1 cols. 1-2; 23 August 1871, p. 1 cols. 1-2; 6 September 1871, p. 1 cols. 1-2.

exercise of simple faith, was his favourite subject... he repeatedly urged this important truth that to believe now, was the privilege of every penitent".³⁹ This of course is not exclusively religious psychology, resembling the greater success of a medical cure which the patient not only comprehends but believes in. The conversion account of a 21 year old Senior Sunday school student in 1874 cited both the principle of Christian nurture and the conviction of sin, but also the necessity of both consent and confidence. Although her pre-conversion personality was "amiable" and "thoughtful", she "lacked the vitalizing power of regenerating grace". Her minister assured the readers that this was not because of "unwillingness to give her heart to Jesus, but because she thought herself unworthy, and held "vague ideas of the nature of saving grace".⁴⁰

The logical consequence of belief as willpower was that there must be "evidence" or "assurance" of conversion, in other words, "conscious religion" or the "witness of the spirit".⁴¹ Robert Hitchings, whose daughters were still members in the 1860s and 1870s, converted in the 1790s. Not surprisingly his account most resembles those from the First

³⁹ See also "Sarah Savage" and "Mary Young".

⁴⁰ "Mary Lamson", 28 November 1874, p. 1 col. 4.

⁴¹ George F. Huestis, p. 148; Robert Wilson, Doctrines, p. 6; TPW, 4 October 1871, p. 1 cols. 1-2.

Great Awakening and the Wesleyan revival: "the light from heaven shone into his mind, forcibly reminding him, he said, of the light which shone around Saul of Tarsus...he then felt that God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven all his sins, and made him happy in his pardoning love." The need for evidence or assurance could result in tremendous demands on the self: although apparently happy in her faith, Hannah Albee still wanted "a stronger confidence, a brighter evidence", which she obtained only at the end of her life. Richard Barter had joined the Methodist church in the 1820s after a great English revival. As late as the 1860s, in a Milltown class meeting:

He expressed himself as not enjoying that clear evidence of the Divine favour which he wished to enjoy, yet a short time before his demise, he assured us that he had peace with God, and his sole trust was in the blood of Christ.⁴²

If they were fortunate enough to gain that confidence early in their lives, some Methodists appeared to maintain "internal peace".⁴³ However, a few were denied that serenity. The 1876 obituary of Mary Mitchell, a daughter of McColl's first convert, referred to "her spiritual enemies" with whom her conflicts "were fierce", although she always

⁴² In addition to "Sarah Savage" and "Richard Barter", see "Hannah Albee", TPW, 13 May 1858, p. 1 col. 1-p. 2 col. 2.

⁴³ "Mary Clendenning", TPW, 30 January 1867, p. 2 col. 2; "Mrs Thomas Frazer", 22 May 1867, p. 2 col. 1.

"conquered".⁴⁴

The religious obituaries of St. Stephen Methodists spent less time describing conversion than they did the subsequent spiritual life of converts. Methodist clergy did not believe that grace was irresistible: the doctrine of probation allowed the possibility of "falling from" or growing towards "the highest state of grace", and was the major theological premise for the nurturing and admonishing fellowship of the Methodist class meeting,⁴⁵ although both conversion and revival accounts show that not all new converts joined the church. Although converted in a McColl revival, Mary Mitchell did not become a member until her first husband's death led her to seek church fellowship in consolation. Charles Wilson, a minister's son whose siblings would later join the Milltown church, was first converted at 18. However, "through unwatchfulness, and by the deadening influence of the prayerless into whose society he was unfortunately thrown...the cheering evidence of his acceptance with God was removed", and not regained for several years. William Hanson converted in the the late 1830s, but he had either ceased his membership by the first extant Mohannas records of 1849 or did not join until 1854.⁴⁶ Others joined the church, seeking conversion:

⁴⁴ "Mary Mitchell", TPW, 5 February 1876, p. 46 cols. 1-2.

⁴⁵ George O. Huestis, p. 157.

although Mary Pulk Williams joined the church as a member on trial after an 1864 revival, her obituary dated her conversion to 1870 shortly before her last illness.⁴⁷

Rabinowitz has argued that whereas the older Calvinist model made conversion the most significant and lengthy part of religious experience, for moralists and devotionalists, "conversion...set one's religious life in motion". Moralists "wanted to substitute commitments to Christian service" for the older evangelical model of self-doubt and regeneration; devotionalists wished to substitute "commitment to a higher religiosity", in which religiosity was measured most by one's psychological state and performance of religious devotions. In Methodist elaborations of the doctrine of "holiness of heart and life", the ideal spiritual life was both moralist and devotionalist. Edwin Evans warned against those who neglected moralism at the expense of devotionalism, arguing that there was "much antinomianism among professed Christians" and that "every true revival" was an "ethical revival".⁴⁸

⁴⁶ "Charles Wilson", 17 December 1857, p. 2 col. 2; "William Hanson", 28 February 1866, p. 2 col. 5.

⁴⁷ In addition to her obituary cited earlier, see SSMR, 1864/65.

⁴⁸ Rabinowitz, pp. 193 and 198; Wilson, Doctrines, p. 6; Evans, Ordination Charge, p. 20.

Apart from the participation of lay Methodists in the temperance movement, the moralist impulse of Methodism is hard to document at the local level. The General Rules were supposed to define the ideal "life habitually conformable to the Scriptures". According to George O. Huestis, the original General Rules "were still in force with but very little change since Mr. Wesley's day", despite recent calls for "their careful revision and amendment in some particulars". In fact, Methodists interpreted some aspects of the Rules more strictly and others more laxly. In addition to restating the basic ethical injunctions of Christianity, the General Rules contained evangelical emphases, such as the firm and fervent sabbatarianism maintained by the church throughout the century.

At the same time, Methodism developed a much stronger and more rigorous stand on any use of alcohol, even within the communion service, and showed greater support for the mainstream temperance movement during the second half of the century. This was a considerable shift from the wariness evident in the 1842 restriction against the use of chapels in New Brunswick by "wandering temperance lecturers known or unknown". According to the first denominational historian of the Eastern British America Conference, this delayed support reflected the prevailing social mores early in the century

which linked abstinence to stinginess or inhospitability and the influence of English Wesleyans, who were "half a century" behind North Americans in "temperance reform". This difference between two cultural strains of Methodism may explain the pattern of Methodist electoral support for 'Smasher' candidates in the 1856 and 1857 New Brunswick elections. Although generally the majority of Methodist voters supported the 'Smashers', the proportion was lower among British immigrant Methodists.⁴⁹ The connection between Methodism in St. Stephen and local temperance groups had been formalized with the 1847 organization in the St. Stephen Methodist Church of the first Sons of Temperance group in British North America. In the 1860s and 1870s, local Methodist ministers gave temperance lectures, and Methodists were among its membership, as well as that of the British Templars.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ George O. Huestis, p. 177; Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era, p. 80; NBDM, 1842; T. Watson Smith, II, pp. 123 and 429; Gail Campbell, "'Smashers' and 'Rummies': Voters and the Rise of Parties in Charlotte County, New Brunswick, 1846-1857", Historical Papers (1986), pp. 111-15.

⁵⁰ Acheson, "Denominationalism", p. 182; SCC, 17 February 1866, p. 2 col. 2; 16 March 1871, p. 2 col. 2; 25 April 1872, p. 2 col. 3; 9 May 1872, p. 2 col. 3; 16 May 1872, p. 2 col. 2; 30 May 1872, p. 2 col. 3; 6 June p. 2 col. 2; 13 March 1873, p. 2 col. 5; 14 May 1874, p. 2 col. 4; 8 July 1875, p. 2 col. 5.

The General Rules also addressed the conduct of business, condemning smuggling, "the giving or taking on usury, i.e. unlawful interest (sic)", "the using of many words in buying or selling", or "borrowing without a probability of paying or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them", and including that broader and perennially ignored biblical warning against "Laying up treasure upon earth". Despite their controversy, these rules received little defense or challenge in the Wesleyan during this time, except for the rare lay lament over contemporary business practices in light of traditional Methodist discipline.⁵¹ This writer also recollected that in his youth the adoption of plain dress was one of the first changes after conversion. Wesley's rule against "the putting on of gold or costly apparel", part of his general advocacy of plain dress in other writings, was abandoned by the Wesleyans, the largest English Methodist group, in the 1820s.⁵² By the 1860s, the Wesleyan carried advertisements for "fashionable" patterns and "fancy goods", even while reiterating the virtues of plain dress or copying American articles from the the dress reform movement which decried women's and children's fashions as expensive, unhealthy or

⁵¹ Discipline (1874), pp. 10-11; TPW, 13 May 1863, p. 2 col. 4.

⁵² Discipline (1874), p. 11; see also the article on "Dress", p. 15; Semmel, p. 142.

immodest. In 1878, Wesley's specific instructions on dress were replaced in the Discipline by a recommendation that "ministers discourage in the Church, whatever...is contrary to Christian simplicity". Perhaps anticipating the social gospel movement, some flavour of the Wesleyan original appeared in the 1881 Pastoral Address to the New Brunswick Conference which criticized "fondness of dress...coveting things", and even "unscrupulous and over-reaching sinful desires in business life".⁵³

The original Wesleyan ideal had been a definite part of McColl's preaching. In 1821, he had written in his journal that neither "men full of merchandise, of mills, logs, farms, cows, and money", nor "women full of silks, gauze, ribbons, ruffles, and worldly finery" could be open to God. Considering these two lists and speculating on the lifestyle of rural and small-town New Brunswick Methodists suggests that by the 1860s, clerics could still rail against excessive finery in dress without seriously inconveniencing many female church members as much as similar warnings against business or agricultural acquisitions would have inconvenienced the men.⁵⁴

⁵³ TPW, 3 June 1863, p. 4; 4 April 1866, p. 2 cols. 2-3, 5-7; JPGC, 1878, pp. 148-49; TPW, 29 July 1881, p. 5 cols. 2-3.

⁵⁴ BNAWMM, June 1842, p. 205.

Perhaps the rules most open to varying interpretation were the general statements on lifestyle forbidding:

Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; particularly speaking evil of Magistrates or Ministers...The taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus. The singing those songs or reading those books which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God. Softness and needless self-indulgence.

The subject of "popular amusements" received greater attention after the 1860s, although it is not clear whether this reflected stricter ministerial mores, increased worldliness among the laity, or simply the presence of greater and more numerous temptations. In the Eastern British America Conference, a standing resolution on the subject was established in 1869, and in 1886, the Discipline clarified the General Rules, by specifying that they forbade:

Dancing, playing at games of chance, encouraging lotteries, attending theatres, horse races, circuses...taking such other amusements as are obviously of a misleading or questionable moral tendency.⁵⁵

In an 1882 pamphlet, one Methodist minister stressed the need for rational rest, relaxation, and recreation, but listed several justifications for the denomination's stand: that such "popular amusements" tended to lead to more serious sins, consumed both money and time, distracting the minds and energies of Methodists from more serious concerns,

⁵⁵ Discipline (1874), p. 11 and (1886), p. 16; EBAC, 1869.

and encouraged the "voluntary social union" of the "godly and ungodly". Yet despite these efforts, one secular commentator noted in 1878 that:

a great change going on in the Methodist Church...its influence is no longer felt against fine dress, lively music, and many other pleasant things of life. It does not yet openly tolerate dancing, but the younger part of the denomination are not averse to it.

He interpreted this change not as one of moral principle or social class but as the waning of sectarianism--a move from spiritual elitism to "a church of the people".⁵⁶

As William James has argued, the similarity of personality and behaviour between the ordinary convert (as opposed to the saint) and that of the virtuous unconverted proved the exaggeration of the claims made for conversion. However, he did suggest--drawing on Emerson--that conversion may still have produced better individuals of the converted, if not better men and women generally. Not surprisingly, Methodist ministers were at pains to explain how the personality and lifestyle of already devout and virtuous Methodists could be transformed by conversion. Orissa King "was always of a very unselfish disposition and seemed to live for others", but "this trait or feature was more clearly seen after her conversion" at age 30 in 1874. Some

⁵⁶ Rev. H. Kenner, Popular Amusements: The Duty of the Officers and Members of the Methodist Church in Relation Thereto (Toronto: William Briggs, 1882), pp. 3-4; Saint John Globe, 25 September 1878, p. 2 col. 1.

members consciously strived for this transformation: James Hannah "had very humble views of his own attainments, well knowing that pure and undefiled religion was not in word only but in deed also". In local spiritual histories, the Methodist virtues most generally prized--other than faithfulness and regular participation in church life-- for men were generosity or leadership, and for women, their hospitality or care of the sick.⁵⁷

Wesley's most original and controversially resonating theological ideas were expressed in the vocabulary of holiness or growth in grace: Christian perfection, gradual or entire sanctification, or full salvation.⁵⁸ Although Christian perfection embodied both the moralist and devotionalist impulses--sanctification as the achievement of perfect love of both God and neighbour, 'sanctification' was increasingly associated with devotionalism, or the achievement of an ambiguous "higher state" of psychological experience. Only the Methodist belief in the constant possibility of falling from even the highest state of grace kept 'entire sanctification' from approaching antinomianism.

⁵⁷ James, pp. 191-94; In addition to obituaries already cited, "Orissa King", TPW, 10 November 1877, p. 2 col. 5; "James Hannah", 17 April 1856, p. 2 cols. 1-2; "Lucretia Hitchings", 14 February 1852, p. 2 col. 6.

⁵⁸ See the overlapping vocabulary in the 'full salvation' section of The Methodist Hymn Book, (Toronto and Halifax, 1882).

Within Methodism, most debate centered on the path to this state. As John Leland Peters has summarized, Wesley established an unstable and ambivalent synthesis in his explanations of sanctification, as "the instantaneous and the gradual, faith and nurture, process and crisis".⁵⁹ Within American Methodism, the Wesleyan synthesis divided into two strands, one a "dimly remembered tradition" within mainstream accommodating Methodism, the other emphasizing "a single climactic experience", characteristic of the holiness movement.

The Wesleyan followed the latter's course, and distributed its periodicals and publications through the Book Steward. The movement's founder Phoebe Palmer visited revivals and camp meetings in the Maritimes starting in the 1850s, and helped inaugurate the Berwick, Nova Scotia Camp Meeting, which by the 1880s featured a day for the holiness association.⁶⁰ The prominence of the holiness movement in the Wesleyan waxed and waned in relation to the American counterpart. The movement was strong in the 1840s and 1850s, but weakened with the preoccupation of the churches with

⁵⁹ John Leland Peters, Christian Perfection and American Methodism (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 51.

⁶⁰ Peters, pp. 109-13; TPW, 13 January 1859, p. 3 col. 4; 11 December 1874, p. 4 col. 4; 30 June 1859, p. 1 col. 1; 21 July 1869, p. 2 col. 4; 18 July 1874, p. 2 cols. 4-5; Holme Fleming, Berwick Camp Meeting: The First Hundred Years 1872-1972 (Antigonish, N.S.: Casket Printing and Publishing Company Ltd, 1972), p. 22.

abolitionism and the Civil War, to revive in the mid 1870s. By 1880, the Nova Scotia Conference was holding holiness conventions, and hosting speakers from the American movement, and promoting entire sanctification in local revivals.⁶¹

Despite the coverage of the American holiness movement, formal denominational expositions of Christian perfection were more circumspect, particularly before the late 1870s. Both Charles Stewart and George O. Huestis restated the original Wesleyan synthesis in their references to sanctification.⁶² However, there were only two explicit references to 'sanctification' in the annual Pastoral Addresses to the Eastern British America Conference between 1855 and 1874.⁶³ In the Wesleyan, references to the "sanctification of believers" were rare in the 1860s,⁶⁴ although those to 'holiness' were common. According to an 1869 lay jeremiad over Maritime Methodism, contemporary references were unreliable indicators of the true state of the doctrine:

⁶¹ TPW, 15 March 1879, p. 1 cols. 5-6; 9 July 1880, p. 1 col. 3; 15 October 1880, p. 5 col. 1; 18 November 1881, p.4 col. 6 and p. 5 cols. 1-2.

⁶² TPW, 27 December 1871, p. 1 cols. 1-2; George O. Huestis, pp. 152-53.

⁶³ EBAC, 1859, p. 29; 1871, p. 117.

⁶⁴ TPW, 14 April 1869, p. 2 cols. 1-2

Entire sanctification is a state of grace few enjoy, and which is seldom heard of unless in stereotyped expressions which are understood to mean just nothing, or in occasional doctrinal discourses displaying tolerable acquaintance with the theory but very little with the practical operations.⁶⁵

For some ministers, the original vocabulary of sanctification and perfection seems to have been superseded by the idea of "spiritual growth" or "growth in grace".⁶⁶ Thus, although listing "Holiness of Heart and Life" as Methodist doctrine, Robert Wilson's 1893 handbook for new members did not use the vocabulary of 'sanctification' or 'Christian perfection'.⁶⁷

In St. Stephen, just as McColl's views of conversion had been shaped by the context of New Light enthusiasm and potential antinomianism, so was his interpretation of sanctification. His published diary at one point so clearly disputed entire sanctification in this life, that the editor felt obliged to attribute this apologetically to McColl's denominational background in the Episcopal Church of Scotland. McColl wrote that he taught "the doctrine of sanctification, but such a sanctification as admits of a constant growth while a man liveth in this world". McColl

⁶⁵ TPW, 8 December 1869, p. 2 cols. 5-6; see also, 10 November 1869, p. 2 col. 5-6.

⁶⁶ EBAC, 1873; SJDM, 1868; St. Stephen District Meeting (henceforth SSDM), 1879.

⁶⁷ Wilson, Doctrines, p. 6.

approached a defense of entire sanctification without compromising his own beliefs in his description of his wife's deathbed and her "perfect love and peace".⁶⁸

A few St. Stephen spiritual histories made explicit reference to devotionalism and the vocabulary of Christian perfection. Shortly before she became the spiritual leader of a local Methodist society, Ann Jane Robinson--whose children, grandchildren, and their spouses would follow her into the church--"became convinced that it was her privilege to be cleansed from all sin, and be made perfect in love". Mrs. Thomas Frazer had converted at the age of 44 in 1841; according to her memorializer, "From that time on her high Christian character, her deep-toned piety, her delight in holiness...produced a hallowed impression upon all...hers was emphatically the religion of love." Ann Jane's daughter-in-law Sarah Robinson built "a superstructure of personal and social, experimental and practical piety such as abundantly justified her profession". Shortly before her death in 1861, she "pleaded in wrestling faith" and achieved "entire sanctification...believing that Christ was both able and willing thus to bless her". Eliza Keith did not refer to or date her entire sanctification, but appears to have reaffirmed it in her own use of an older theological

⁶⁸ BNAWMM, March 1842, p. 125; December 1841, p. 611; February 1842, p. 50.

vocabulary: during her last illness in 1865/66, she declared "'Bless God for a preached gospel, and a full salvation.'"⁶⁹

Obviously such a profoundly subjective experience was easily accommodated into the observer's own views. In 1876, John Prince wrote that revivals within the District of St. Stephen (which included the circuits surrounding St. Stephen and Milltown) had resulted "in the sanctification of believers and the addition to the churches of such, as we trust should at least be saved." Presumably the laity involved must have given him clues as to which were sanctified and which were only converted. However, Prince may simply have been using his own vocabulary: he was active in Maritime camp meetings, which were associated with the holiness movement.⁷⁰

Yet despite the importance of individual religious experience, the devotionalist impulse in Methodism issued forth not in the stark pietism of a single believer, but in the community of worship, combining both ritual and enthusiasm. The Discipline included Wesley's full liturgical Sunday service, although most ordinary Sunday services in the region used his simpler preaching service,

⁶⁹ In addition to obituaries already cited, "Eliza Keith", TPW, 28 February 1866, p. 2 col. 5.

⁷⁰ SSDM, 1876; Fleming, pp. 17-19; Grace Alton, "Methodist Camp Meeting Days in Kings County", Collections of the New Brunswick Historical Society, #18, 1963, p. 209.

reputedly also the preferred choice of British Methodists.⁷¹ Wesley had instituted Quarterly Fast Days for Methodist Societies as well as the congregation, but as early as the 1840s there were complaints that these days were insufficiently observed. Between 1861 and 1870, the Conference of Eastern British America maintained a standing order naming the Fast Days for the coming conference year, recommending that ministers hold "special services in their principal churches" on those occasions. Without any comment, the order ceased to appear in the printed minutes, although a Letter from the Conference President published in the Wesleyan at the end of 1873 indicates that the Fast Days were still set aside for special services. Yet few other references to the practice appear. According to Huestis, fasting, "a means of grace if observed as the Scriptures direct, and with a single eye to the glory of God", was "much neglected". Robert Wilson omitted the practice from his 1893 handbook's discussion of "the means of grace".⁷²

Although the rule was not universally observed, in English Methodism the communion service was theoretically open only to members or those who had obtained admittance

⁷¹ T. Watson Smith, II, p. 424; Trevor Dearing, Wesleyan and Tractarian Worship: An Ecumenical Study (London: Epworth Press, 1966), pp. 28-29 and 41.

⁷² NBDM, 1840-41; TPW, 15 December 1873, p. 2 cols. 3-4; 21 December 1873, p. 2 cols. 4-5; George O. Huestis, p. 170.

from the minister. The Canadian edition of the Discipline repeated this rule during its successive editions, despite its total opposition to local practice. Methodism in the Maritime Provinces, and perhaps elsewhere as well, had returned to Wesley's own belief in communion as an open and potentially "converting ordinance". Methodists prided themselves on this policy, and frequently criticized their opponents, particularly the Baptists, when the issue came up as a result of ecumenical efforts such as the Evangelical Alliance. Reflecting a compromise position between their Anglican origins and the infrequent communion services of Baptists or Presbyterians, Methodist churches held communion on the first Sunday evening of every month, with a collection for the poor.⁷³ Methodism also offered both infant and adult baptism, but although this compromise was a central part of Methodist belief, its elaboration is deferred until Chapter Eight and its discussion of youth and Methodist church membership.

In both England and North America, the watchnight service was open to the public. Held usually in the largest church on a circuit between ten p.m. on December 31 and just after midnight, it was often the occasion of conversions from the

⁷³ TPW, 2 May 1866, p. 2 col. 5; 26 August 1868, p. 2 cols. 6-7; 10 November 1873, p. 2 col. 1; Wilson, Doctrines, p. 23.

congregation.⁷⁴ The service for the Renewal of the Covenant, Wesley's richest liturgical creation, took place on the first Sunday of the New Year. Methodist churches in British North America did not exclude nonmembers, although supplicants were invited from the congregation, which did not necessarily participate as a whole. Enthused with moralism and devotionism, it demonstrated the continuity of nineteenth century evangelicalism with traditional Christian piety by quoting from Thomas a Kempis, whose Imitation of Christ was considered a spiritual classic by Wesley. Reflecting the importance of both conversion and holiness, parts of the service exhorted some to the conviction of sin or the assurance of salvation, while other passages exhorted converts to the evangelical lifestyle or spiritual growth.⁷⁵

The covenant service exemplified how Methodism institutionalized revivalism. Although this term has been used interchangeably with enthusiasm or experimental religion, it more specifically refers to forms of collective evangelical worship designed to encourage spiritual

⁷⁴ TPW, 2 January 1861, p. 2 col. 3; 16 December 1868, p. 2 cols. 2-3.

⁷⁵ Discipline (1874), pp. 163-78; David Tripp, The Renewal of The Covenant in the Methodist Tradition (London: Epworth Press, 1969), pp. 37-38; Wilson, p. 18; TPW, 4 January 1860, p. 3 col. 1.

encounters expressed in the language of conversion and holiness.⁷⁶ It is also important to distinguish between the use of these forms and their actual results. Measuring revivalism by the former involves the content of piety, but measuring revivalism by the latter involves church growth itself. The remainder of this chapter therefore considers revivalism within Methodist belief and worship, while the dynamics of revivalism--incidence, geography, or results--are deferred to Chapter Five.

Clerical writers also distinguished between a 'great' revival, on the grand scale of the Reformation, Puritanism, or the "preaching of Wesley and Whitefield", and the local revival.⁷⁷ According to writers in the Wesleyan, a revival awakened "the dormant", converted sinners, reclaimed "backsliders", renewed "the spiritual life of believers", and produced larger congregations or new converts.⁷⁸ A revival referred not just to the "mass evangelism" of the camp or urban meeting,⁷⁹ but also to significant church growth--however gradual--or to the results--however small--of forms of worship which shared a certain content

⁷⁶ Westfall, p. 56.

⁷⁷ TPW, 24 March 1859, p. 2 cols. 2-3

⁷⁸ TPW, 14 April 1869, p. 2 cols. 1-2; 13 November 1860, p. 2 col. 6; 23 December 1873, p. 2 col. 2.

⁷⁹ Semple, "The Quest for the Kingdom", p. 96.

and style. Since the smallest of these forms, the class meeting which included both converts and those seeking conversion, identified the membership within Methodist polity, its discussion is deferred to the next chapter. However, the weekly prayer meetings and the 'special service' presented the most public face of Methodist revivalism.

With institutionalized revivalism for members in the class meeting and for adherents or onlookers in the prayer meeting, clerical writers easily reconciled the primacy of the Holy Spirit and the importance of local efforts with the aid of 'free theology'. Since revivals could not "be effected without divine power...divine aid must be sought more effectually". When considering what made for a successful revival, some writers focused on the spiritual state of the churches involved, insisting that the most essential ingredients were not just prayer and zeal, but also the lifestyle of the already converted, which might turn away nonconverts or warrant divine displeasure and the withholding of "reviving grace".⁸⁰ Some claimed that revivals did not occur because churches had forgotten that Methodism "should be a continued revival", and had come to

⁸⁰ TPW, 20 November 1872, p. 4 cols. 1-3; 24 March 1859, p. 1 cols. 1-2; 4 April 1866, p. 2 cols. 2-3, 5-7; 16 January 1867, p. 1 cols. 1-2; 30 January 1867, p. 2 cols. 2-3; 23 December 1873, p. 2 col. 2.

expect and plan for revivals only in the form of special services. Although an 1877 editorial in the Wesleyan reviewing the whole of Canadian Methodism spent more time on techniques for church growth than on the spiritual state of church leaders, it also stressed the importance of varied and year round evangelism which included but was not dependent on the traditional forms of revivalism. Nevertheless, it closed by returning to the necessity of "a deeper work of grace among believers as a qualification for that prayerfulness which prevails with God and that earnestness which prevails with sinners".⁸¹

It is easy to chart the changing content of revivalism only by this kind of clerical discussion. However, quite apart from the role of calls for revival as a ritual jeremiad in church life, this discussion taken out of the context of trans-Atlantic evangelicalism and actual lay religious life can be misleading. The confusing record of the revivalist tradition in Maritime Methodism exemplifies this. Although Wesleyan revivalism surged in England just after the war of 1812, these decades also saw its diversion into sectarianism. In response, the Wesleyan hierarchy attempted both to control the nature of revivalism within its bounds and to gain back its lost momentum. The Liverpool

⁸¹ TPW, 10 November 1869, p. 2 cols. 2-3; 8 September 1877, p. 2 cols. 1-2

Minutes of the 1820 Conference, which continued as required annual reading for all Wesleyan conferences, including those in the Maritimes after 1855, represented the Wesleyan compromise. According to Julia Stewart Werner, the Minutes relaxed some previous strictures concerning revivalism and sanctioned prolonged or outdoor meetings under "a new name", which along with other measures produced Wesleyan revivals in 1821 and 1822. In the first denominational history of Methodism in the region, T. Watson Smith's description of the Nova Scotian "great meeting" lasting several days held annually in September between 1817 and 1819 is followed by his note that the Liverpool Minutes resolved that such meetings could henceforth be held only with the consent of local districts. According to Smith, "protracted meetings" were officially implemented in the region in 1835/36, although "in certain sections of the Lower Provinces they were by no means a novelty". The exact nature of local revivalism must await a reconstruction from community histories and religious obituaries such as that of Thomas Hannah in St. Stephen which recorded his conversion at a "protracted meeting" held in 1833.⁸² The relegation of the first of Smith's qualifications to a footnote in the

⁸² Julia Stewart Werner, The Primitive Methodist Connexion: Its Background and Early History (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), pp. 33, 49, 170, 184; T. Watson Smith, II, pp. 89-91 and 275; TFW, 15 February 1855, p. 2 col. 4.

earliest academic study of Maritime Methodism and the overlooking of the second resulted in the repetition of a myth in two surveys of Canadian church history: that in Maritime Methodism "revival meetings" were prohibited between 1820 and 1835.⁸³

There are unfortunately few references to the specific features of local revivalism between 1855 and 1881--the years in which most Methodist members in this study were converted. Held throughout this period in the larger villages along the St. Croix, the weeknight prayer meetings were the most regular public form of revivalist piety, the 'ordinary means of grace'. One Maritime minister wrote that the style of Methodist prayer meetings was not as informal as those he attended while visiting Boston, but that he had adopted the latter style in subsequent itinerancies with great success.⁸⁴ A Milltown minister reporting on an extensive revival in the neighbouring town of St. Stephen in 1874 added:

We are not having any extra number [sic] services, but our Sunday and week evenings meetings are interesting....All services for God should have special object and aim; every one must be numbered in the great awakening. On Monday week one soul

⁸³ French, Parsons and Politics, pp. 65, 82, 91; John S. Moir, The Church in the British Era (Toronto: McGraw Hill, 1972), p. 141; Handy, p. 234.

⁸⁴ Robert Wilson, Never Give Up; Or, Life in the Lower Provinces (Saint John: Daily News Steam Job Office, 1878), p. 270.

found peace with God, arose and said 'I feel God has forgiven all my sins.' Last night two came up for prayer; and obtained mercy.⁸⁵

The 'call to the altar' had always been a regular part of American Methodism, but did not appear in British Methodism until the 1820s, and then only occasionally. Those actively seeking salvation came forward to kneel at the altar rail or the open area at the front of the congregation. According to Richard Carwardine, this was not the same as the practice introduced later in the Presbyterian revivals of the 1830s, the "anxious seat" or "mourner's bench" which was the first pew set aside for supplicants. There are no St. Stephen references to this practice, although the 1869 lay jeremiad cited earlier lamented the disuse of the "penitent bench". Interpreting these scant references is confusing: was the latter measure introduced into New Brunswick in the 1830s and then abandoned, or were the references interchangeable, since the intent was the same-- to focus the attention of the congregation and the convert? If the latter is so, St. Stephen churches would appear to have retained the traditional measure longer than those criticized by 'Layman'.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ TPW, 4 May 1874, p. 2 col. 7.

⁸⁶ Richard Carwardine, Trans-Atlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America 1790-1865 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978), pp. 13 and 120; TPW, 22 December 1869, p. 2 cols. 2-3.

The 'call to the altar' was part of both this small prayer meeting and the larger 'protracted meetings', the more prominent form of revivalism. According to the obituary of Celia Smith:

At a protracted meeting in Milltown in the spring of 1861, she with her sisters and several others, availed herself of the opportunity which an invitation to the altar for prayer afforded, and there received the blessing of pardoning love.⁸⁷

Varying types of exhortation inspired these public professions. A description from a joint St. Stephen and Milltown revival in 1874 is worth quoting at length, as it demonstrates both the traditional content of Methodist preaching and the stages and types of conversion. Some converts:

were brought into the fold of Christ by the gentle invitation and sweet promises of the Gospel, nothing more being required; the work of conviction of sin and sense of exposure to its penalty having been previously wrought by the soul-stirring preaching of my predecessors...In some instances, indeed, all that seemed wanting to fulfill the will of Christ was a public confession of existing saving faith; a coming forward to this duty from motions of love to God...But in other cases, we had to reason on righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, till souls trembled, and being warned of God, were moved with fear, longing for the solution to the alarming question...How can ye escape the damnation of hell?⁸⁸

⁸⁷ TPW, 10 September 1862, p. 2 col. 1.

⁸⁸ TPW, 20 April 1874, p. 2 col. 4.

Writers also stressed the effects of revivals on the converted, as in an 1864 revival in which "believers were much blessed, and their faith greatly strengthened". Although just beyond the period of this study, a description from 1882 usefully shows how ritual worship such as the watchnight service could be combined with revivalism: although only "one soul was deeply convinced of sin", "many realized it to be a blessing".⁸⁹

The length and location of 'protracted meetings' in Maritime Methodism appears to have varied according to season, year, climate, and local terrain. From seasonal work habits, the long evenings, and perhaps the psychological effects of shorter and colder days, winter was "by long-established custom" the revival season.⁹⁰ In St. Stephen, meetings could last several hours, and in 1869 and 1874 revivals reportedly lasted for months. Again reflecting the concern to encourage revival within ordinary worship, some ministers argued that revivals sometimes failed because of excessive length and florid eloquence. They defended "short plain speech...in an earnest, loving way", and argued that ministers should convert persons not crowds.⁹¹ A few

⁸⁹ TPW, 23 March 1864, p. 2 cols. 5-6; 16 March 1883, p. 6 cols. 2-3.

⁹⁰ TPW, 10 November 1869, p. 2 col. 5-6; 31 January 1872, p. 2 cols. 1-2; Luker, p. 612; despite this tradition, Methodist clergy sometimes blamed severe weather for poor attendance at evening services (see SJDM, 1873).

open-air services are documented: a series in 1856 led by a Wesleyan Methodist minister held in the new St. Stephen rural cemetery; another led jointly by Canadian and American Methodists in Maine in 1871.⁹²

New Brunswick enthusiasm even in the 1790s did not have a camp meeting tradition per se, perhaps simply because of the combination of climate, geography and dispersed population, perhaps because this form, which originated in the Old West, was not introduced into New England and Great Britain until the early nineteenth century. By the 1850s, local Methodist ministers led camp meetings in parts of New Brunswick, but without grounds or buildings such as those then being established in Ontario.⁹³ Perhaps because of the hilliness of the parish combined with the gradual 'urbanization' of the river valley, St. Stephen Methodists do not appear to have held camp meetings, although at least two of their ministers during the 1860s and 1870s had been camp meeting leaders. In 1860, R. A. Temple along with other ministers participated in a meeting of reportedly 4,000 in Woodstock

⁹¹ TPW, 16 January 1867, p. 1 cols. 1-2; 15 October 1880, p. 4 cols. 2-3.

⁹² TPW, 2 October 1856, p. 2 col. 6; 5 October 1871, p. 2 col. 4.

⁹³ Carwardine, p. 14; NBDM, 1857; Grace Alton, pp. 208-10; TPW, 27 June 1860, p. 3 col. 4; 8 June 1869, p. 2 col. 3; 21 July 1869, p. 2 col. 4; 14 February 1872, p. 1 col. 1; See also the unpublished Journal of NBPEIC, 1877.

with traditional Methodist "shouting" and "singing". John Prince led camp meetings in Kings County in the 1850s and would help found the Berwick Camp Meeting in Nova Scotia. However, there may have been at least one lay connection with nondenominational meetings held elsewhere, perhaps in Maine. Johnson and Sarah Sears, probably from the American side of the river, had married in the Wesleyan Methodist church and joined a class meeting after the Milltown revival of 1869. In 1874, the Courier reported that he was the local representative for the "International General Harmony Camp Meeting Association", which invited all "Christian preachers with their congregations" to attend their next gathering.⁹⁴

The historiography of changing Methodist piety has focused less on the form or content of revivalism, which at least in St. Stephen appears to have remained in continuity with that of McColl's time, than on what can be best described as the style of revivalism. In the case of St. Stephen, McColl's early leadership and perhaps the beliefs of local settlers as well (since occasional New Light incursions produced no lasting churches) appears to have kept the early community from the extremes of random movement or noise. However, spontaneity in the form of

⁹⁴ TPW, 29 August 1860, p. 2 cols. 2-3; Fleming, p. 22; Marriage and Membership Records, Milltown circuit 1868-70; SCC, 18 June 1874, p. 2 col. 3.

"extempore prayer and extempore preaching" combined with emotional display remained important. A number of church members in the 1860s had joined in an 1858 Milltown revival, where there were reportedly: "truly soul-refreshing heart-cheering seasons. The friends are saying with tears in their eyes, these are good days--happy times."⁹⁵ In 1859, Methodists from St. Stephen had attended a "powerful and glorious revival" in neighbouring Oak Bay. This revival appears to have prompted some local criticism, since it was followed by a polemic from St. David published in the Wesleyan on the "Scribes and Pharisees and Doctors of our day" who would rebuke religious "excitement". The minister disclaimed "mere animal excitement in the Church", but defended "the praising and rejoicing which pardoning love produces". In the 1864 revival in St. Stephen, "Many were heard to say they never felt so happy, never experienced so rich a baptism of the Divine Spirit as during those meetings."⁹⁶

Yet by the late 1870s, some clerical observers in the Maritimes, as in Central Canada, saw changes in the style of revivalism. An editorial in the Wesleyan, written perhaps from the perspective of Methodism in the largest Maritime

⁹⁵ TPW, 27 August 1857, p. 2 cols. 1-2; 20 May 1858, p. 2 col. 4.

⁹⁶ TPW, 7 April 1859, p. 2 cols. 3-4. 23 March 1864, p. 2 cols. 5-6.

city, called "for more spontaneity in the church". It lamented that some valued eloquent preaching more than a "rousing prayer meeting" and that "As for Methodist shouts, they are banished to lands less cultivated and more earnest". George O. Huestis warned: "We hear much about old-fashioned conversions. Can there be any other kind?" Another editorial urged that the traditional prayer meeting not be superseded by those featuring mainly song and the "testimony" of the already converted. However, the centennial celebration of Methodism in Atlantic Canada cited the holiness movement as illustrating how, in some respects, experimental religion or the "witness of the spirit" were even more "explicit" in the 1880s than they had been in pioneer regional Methodism. It is possible that Maritime Methodism remained more enthusiastic or more accomodating of its different strains, thus protecting itself from the divisions over revivalism that occurred in Ontario, or at least delaying them until the church union debate.⁹⁷

Although Neil Semple sees a decline in revivalism within Ontario Methodism as part of "the general decline in emotional pietism", the resurgence of revivals in the last decades of the century qualifies this. William Westfall suggests that Ontario Methodism recovered some of the

⁹⁷ TPW, 11 January 1879, p. 4 col. 2; 1 February 1879, p. 6 cols. 1-2; 2 September 1881, p. 4 col. 1; Stephen F. Huestis, p. 65.

original Wesleyan moderation while at the same time merging with late nineteenth century romanticism in its aesthetic of architecture or music and its "rhetoric of inspiration and heroic individualism". This view more accurately recognizes the continuity of traditional emotional piety along with the elements of change, and matches Richard Rabinowitz's argument that the dominant "economy" of religious experience in nineteenth century New England moved through doctrinalism, moralism, and devotionalism or even sentimentalism, a narrowing of religion to feelings and the technical means of producing them. Although late nineteenth century Maritime Methodism contained elements of all three of these styles, the distinction between devotionalism which might still have a theological or ethical direction and sentimentalism might be one that critics such as George Huestis would have recognized.⁹⁸

Methodist members and adherents in St. Stephen during the 1860s and 1870s lived between two eras of their denomination's life: the missionary and the national, the pioneer and the modern. They included McColl converts, adults who had converted between 1830 and 1860 or would join the church between 1861 and 1881, and young Methodists who would live to see church union in 1925. The religious life

⁹⁸ Semple, "The Quest for the Kingdom", p. 110; Airhart, pp. 83-84; Westfall, pp. 76-89; Rabinowitz, p. 157.

of any inter-generational community will necessarily be varied, the mixture of the first-hand experience, second-hand tradition, and the experience and traditions of newcomers. But setting aside the differences of culture or personality, the Methodism they shared had a central core of belief. Edwin Evans, who preached in St. Stephen in the 1870s, summarized it as "a full salvation, a free salvation, a salvation for every man and woman".⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Evans, Ordination Charge, p. 13.

Chapter III
'Hearers' and 'Members': Polity and Place in
Local Methodism

Before census returns of nominal adherence, the most obvious affiliational distinction within Methodism was between 'hearers' and 'members'. Their very names convey the dynamic of associational choice and associational commitment. 'Hearers' may have sampled or shared with church members in Methodist belief or worship. Some demonstrated further commitment by renting a pew or subscribing for the support of the minister. However, those who were only hearers remained outside the "nucleus of the church": the Society of class meetings in a particular place.¹ This last phrase exemplifies nineteenth century Methodism's ambivalent ecclesiology. With the formal separation from the Church of England, first in North America during Wesley's lifetime and in England after his death, Methodism inherited his terms of Society membership which had been intended for a church within a church. Nineteenth century Methodist writers never claimed that

¹ George O. Huestis, p. 171.

their denomination was more than a branch of the visible Church,² which they defined in various ways. The three most important distinctions were between the denominational, latitudinarian and sectarian senses of the word, or the church as the 'connexional' organization, the potential or actual congregation, or the Society. Debates over infant and adult baptism and, more particularly, debates on the nature of church membership turned on these semantic questions. For if the class meeting or Society of meetings was the "nucleus" of the church, were its members the only church members?

Although ecclesiological debate was as important to apologists and reformers of traditional Methodist polity as was the distinction between hearers and members to compilers of church statistics, it is impossible to determine what most lay Methodists themselves thought about these issues. In fact, one layman wrote in 1877 that some, perhaps many, Methodists had no clear idea of their denomination's definition of church membership. In response, the editor of the Wesleyan summarized: "Membership supposes 'a desire to flee from the wrath to come', a life habitually conformable to the Scriptures, and regular attendance on the means of

² See Wesley's article "Of The Church" in Discipline (1874), p. 5; George O. Huestis, p. 104; Stephen Bond, Church Membership; or the Conditions of New Testament and Methodist Church Membership Examined and Compared (Toronto: William Briggs, 1882), p. 15.

grace".³ Yet since conversion and revival accounts show that not all converts joined the church, and since clergy exhorted both hearers and members to the Methodist lifestyle, the behavioural distinction between them was social rather than theological, one of polity rather than ecclesiology. In a pluralist setting, the social organization of the nineteenth century voluntarist church was both "associational" and "physical", defined by the location of congregational or church members in relation to each other and by the location of church buildings and clergy.⁴ Methodism's organization of hearers and members into congregations and Societies within a circuit exemplified the intersection of polity and place.

In Wesleyan tradition and in St. Stephen during the 1860s and 1870s, the distinction within what can be called Methodism's 'spiritual polity' was clear: members attended the class meeting, and after they permanently ceased attendance, they ceased to be counted as members. In Wesleyan tradition, the distinction between hearers and members was also part of what can be called 'temporal polity': the members provided its lay leadership and financially supported the church. However, examining

³ TPW, 29 September 1877, p. 4 col. 1-3.

⁴ Currie et al., p. 7; Michael S. Franch, "The Congregational Community in the Changing City, 1840-70", Maryland Historical Magazine, 71(1976), p. 371.

Methodist polity as it worked in specific places shows that this latter distinction was less clearcut. Even within the Wesleyan and at regional meetings, many ministers promoted the separation of spiritual polity from temporal polity, in order to preserve the nature of the class meeting as representing purely religious commitment. Locally, churches accepted leadership and financial support where they found it--from congregations made up of both hearers and members. Yet although temporal polity in local Methodism was subtly changed by the late 1870s, Methodism's traditional spiritual polity survived both national and local challenges.

The desire for conversion and church membership was enough for admission to the class meeting. Presumably to test their sincerity and purpose, "candidates" were recognized as members on trial after meeting three or four weeks in class, and were required to attend class for at least three months before being eligible for membership on the recommendation of the class leader. In theory, members in good standing from other evangelical churches might join at the minister's discretion, but with the exception of members from other Methodist churches with letters of transfer, all joined as members on trial, even lapsed Methodist members.⁵ As described in the Doctrines and

⁵ TPW, 29 September 1877, p. 4 cols. 1-3; George O. Huestis, p. 178.

Discipline, the service for the reception of new members asked applicants to "renew the solemn consecration of yourself to God, and take upon you the sacred obligations involved and set forth in the holy ordinance of Baptism". The four remaining questions invited the candidate to assent to a short and simple Arminian soteriology and a statement on the authority of the Bible, to "cheerfully be governed by the rules of the Methodist Church", to "endeavour" according to his or her ability and means to support the church spiritually and financially, and "promote the welfare of your brethren and the advancement of the Redeemer's Kingdom". Finally, the Society was asked to agree or object to each individual's admission before the minister welcomed the new members on behalf of the church. The probability of local variation in this service is suggested by two memorials--12 years apart in the unpublished Journal of the Eastern British American Conference-- requesting a ruling on "the subject of a uniform method" or the "proper mode of admitting persons into our church".⁶

Methodist apologists claimed that the distinctive fellowship of members--in the love feast and the class meeting--was drawn from the model of the early church.⁷

⁶ Discipline (1874), pp. 16, 139-40; Journal, EBAC, 1862, 1874.

⁷ Evans, Ordination Charge, p. 15; TPW, 1 February 1865, p. 2 cols. 3-4; 14 February 1872, p. 2 col. 3.

Since Robert Wilson omitted some traditional Methodist vocabulary and practices from his 1893 handbook, his description of the love feast suggests that it did survive the century. The love feast involved singing, prayer, an "address on the nature of the service...partaking of bread and water passed round by members...Collection for the poor" and "relation of experience". This tradition was not without some challenge, however, for in 1876, a district unsuccessfully put forth a resolution that local lay leaders be allowed to omit the distribution of bread and water.⁸

Wesley had originally insisted on small class meetings of around twelve individuals meeting weekly with a lay leader. Since membership growth was not matched by growth in the numbers of lay leaders, Methodist expansion produced the reverse in many societies: larger classes led by ministers.⁹ A meeting could vary in length from a half hour to over an hour and a half, although commentators preferred the shorter time and deprecated the effect of the larger size on the intimacy of the meeting.¹⁰ The class leader was to inquire

⁸ Wilson, Doctrines, p. 17; Journal, NBPEIC, 1876.

⁹ The shortage of class leaders was a recurring concern within the Wesleyan, Pastoral Addresses, and conference records: see, for example, SJDM, 1870.

¹⁰ John Atkinson, The Class Leader: His Work and How To Do It, with Illustrations of Principles, Deeds, Methods, and Results (Toronto: Samuel Rose; Halifax: A.W. Nicholson, 1875), p. 94. According to the Preface, because the original American edition had been too expensive for

of members "how their souls prosper; to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort", establishing "not only how each person observes the outward rules, but how he grows in the knowledge and love of God". Moreover, the leader was also to speak frankly about his or her own "faults" and "trials".¹¹ Leaders were advised to discourage any tendency among one or more members to monopolize the conversation or engage in excessive "speechmaking". Leaders ideally could direct the conversation so that "an old member's experience" was balanced by that of a young member, "a somewhat methodic style" with "a fervent one", and "an experience of a person much cast down or depressed", with "a happy triumphant one".¹²

Other than the implication in a few local spiritual histories that their contents were told to class meetings, there are no specific references to the nature of these meetings in St. Stephen. Clerical discussion of the class meeting in the Wesleyan suggests a range of possibilities. One Saint John writer claimed that the "present day" class meeting was "too often" a "formal, monotonous thing",

Canadian circulation, the newly linked Toronto and Halifax editors had condensed it "without impairing its value".

¹¹ Wilson, Doctrines, p. 13; Discipline (1874), pp. 9-10, p. 21; TPW, 1 February 1865, p. 3 cols. 3-4.

¹² Atkinson, p. 43.

lacking either novelty or the power of a choice made under persecution. According to him, the present "custom" was still "for the leader to address each one personally...or for each one to relate his experience in a set form of words, too often alas! the same from week to week".

Similarly, a Montreal class leader stressed that a class meeting should be "less like a gathering of undertakers" and more "cheerful and homelike". Howard Sprague, who served the Milltown circuit in the late 1860s and the St. Stephen circuit in the late 1870s, may have strived to make the class meetings under his direction more like this, for he remarked in 1878 that "if the class-meeting was less formal and more social and familiar, its influence would be advanced".¹³ In 1862 however, the Wesleyan editor wrote that in his experience "the practice of enquiring with any particularity how the respective souls in the class prosper has almost fallen into disuse", replaced solely by testimony and prayer:

Some apparently forget that they have anything to learn, and therefore indulge in long and pointless exhortation....the modesty of others is so great that they cannot speak audibly, or... positively refuse to open their lips.¹⁴

¹³ TPW, 26 February 1873, p. cols. 1-2; 6 April 1878, p. 2 cols. 1-2; See the Report of the class meeting debate found in TPW, 5 October 1878, p. 1 cols. 1-3, p. 2 cols. 3-5, and p. 3 cols. 1-2, henceforth "Report".

¹⁴ TPW, 19 February 1862, p. 2 cols. 1-2.

By the 1870s, a number of leaders had modified or abandoned the traditional method of questioning each individual one by one. Some recommended a combination of hymns, prayer, Bible readings, and more spontaneous and flexible conversation. Leaders were advised to "instruct the ignorant in the first principles of religion if need be to repeat, explain, or enforce what has been said in public preaching". The class meeting was also an opportunity "for presenting, and explaining more fully than could otherwise be done any contemplated enterprise or any proposed change in the constitution of the Church". Whether members were openly or implicitly pressured to speak appears to have varied from church to church and depended as much on the membership as on the minister. In the 1878 General Conference debate on requiring class meeting attendance for continued church membership, all those who spoke insisted that speaking was not compulsory. However, according to one Ontario minister, "in three fourths of the class-meetings of the country, brethren would go and look into the face of new converts and say 'Come you must get up and say something.'"¹⁵

Other considerations of the class meeting, including a series from a future Milltown minister, Samuel Ackman, stressed more positive themes, particularly Christian

¹⁵ TPW, 26 February 1873, p. 2 cols. 1-2; 6 April 1878, p. 2 cols. 1-2; Atkinson, pp. 90, 109-10; "Report", 1878.

fellowship. Ackman argued that the class meeting was a place for "advice" concerning religious belief, a place where the member could find "sympathy and love" when faced with "the trials of human life", and a place for "edification", a euphemism for mutual oversight and encompassing both ethical and spiritual growth.¹⁶ As summarized by an 1878 leaders' meeting in Montreal:

Members are brought face to face; they learn each other's names; they become acquainted with each other's joys and sorrows; they pray with and for each other, and the natural result of it all is that they come to cherish for each other a tender Christian sympathy to which otherwise they might have remained strangers.¹⁷

Methodist apologists argued that in addition to sustaining the membership, the class meeting provided crucial support and nurture for those seeking conversion or the newly converted.¹⁸ The class meeting ideally also served the individuals as persons, not just as church members, enabling

¹⁶ Ackman's series is found in TPW, 13 December 1871, p. 2 cols. 2-3; 14 February 1872, p. 2 col. 3; 27 March 1872, p. 2 col. 3; 9 May 1872, p. 2 col. 4; See also William Morley Punshon, Sermons, in Which is Prefixed a Plea for Class Meetings with an Introduction by H. Milbourn (San Francisco, E. Thomas, 1868), pp. 27-38; Punshon was a very active and prominent clergyman in the Wesleyan Conferences in England and British North America. His pamphlet, "Tabor: or The Class Meeting" was often cited in the Wesleyan.

¹⁷ TPW, 6 April 1878, p. 2 cols. 1-2.

¹⁸ TPW, 11 September 1867, p. 2 cols. 2-5; 13 December 1871, p. 2 cols. 2-3.

members to respond to the Scriptural command that they "bear each other's burdens".¹⁹ The "counsels, admonitions, or exhortations" of both leader and members were intended not only to strengthen an individual's overall faith, but to address specific problems in his or her life, whether decisions or actions.²⁰ Perhaps recalling the acrimonious history of English Methodism, writers advised leaders to "check the first spark of offence and discord", and stressed both the parallel with family life, and the links between the class meeting, "connexional unity", and the strength of the church.²¹

In theory, Methodism had various procedures for recovering and excluding members who ceased to attend class, ranging from the private appeals and exhortations of class leaders and ministers to an elaborate trial and appeal process. The presence of only one reference over twenty years in the Wesleyan to the use of these procedures may reflect extreme discretion, or conformity with the English Wesleyan experience, where reportedly few excluded members ever appealed.²² As mentioned in Chapter One (p. 32), St.

¹⁹ George O. Huestis, p. 198; EBAC, 1862.

²⁰ TPW, 11 September 1867, p. 2 cols. 2-5; 13 December 1871, p. 2 cols. 2-3; EBAC, 1862.

²¹ Atkinson, p. 105; TPW, 1 February 1865, p. 2 cols. 3-4; 6 April 1878, p. 2 cols. 1-2; See also Ackman, Punshon, and "Report".

Stephen ministers appear to have been either generous or hopeful in sometimes waiting up to two years after members ceased to attend class before striking their names from the records. Some ministers left comments such as "doubtful" or "is a broken---" beside names in the records, but most comments and the generally rapid membership turnover meant that most people left the church before the church could exclude them. Those who remained received membership tickets, theoretically four times a year, certainly annually: local records show revisions done in March and June (the annual district and conference meetings were held in June and July), and, for some classes, quarterly contributions of 'ticket money'. Although none are preserved in local church records, these tickets--each printed with a single Scripture verse--possessed sentimental value for some: one local lay leader, who had joined in 1840 kept his first two tickets throughout his life.²³ In theory, the Eastern British American Conference kept a standing order that the "English" practice "respecting quarterly schedules of the state of every class and Society...be adopted". This was never done in St. Stephen, and in both 1859 and 1877 the

²² Discipline (1874), pp. 88-91; TPW, 25 December 1861, p. 3 col. 3; John S. Simon, A Manual of Instruction and Advice to Class Leaders (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1892), p. 74.

²³ TPW, 13 February 1861, p. 3 col. 4; 31 March 1869, p. 3 col. 2; SSMR and MTMR; 'Andrew Murchie', SCC, 18 December 1890, p. 2 col. 1.

regional conference recommended (but never funded) the publication of class record books. The failure of an 1890 resolution to the General Conference calling for annual membership renewal and the reference to quarterly membership tickets in Robert Wilson's handbook suggest that this practice survived throughout the century.²⁴

Describing the temporal side of Methodist polity--its leadership and finance--requires first conveying a sense of place within the parish of St. Stephen. In McColl's time, the St. Stephen circuit had encompassed all of Charlotte County. The first generation of Methodist converts were drawn from pre-Revolutionary settlers from Maine, Loyalists from the Port Mouton and Penobscot Associations, and members of the disbanded regiment of the 74th Highlanders. The first wave of British immigration into Charlotte County, consisting mainly of Ulster Irish and some Scots and English, increased St. Stephen's population by almost sixty percent between 1824 and 1834. By this time, the county included several Methodist circuits, and the western half of the parish had become the Milltown circuit. A smaller wave of generally Irish Catholic immigration in the 1840s coincided with economic depression and considerable out-migration, particularly of the native-born. Yet by

²⁴ EBAC, 1855, 1859; NBPEI, 1877; Wilson, Doctrines, p. 7; Airhart, p. 75.

1851, St. Stephen was relatively well settled, with a population of 2,868. Over 10% of the parish was cleared, and at mid-century more than 20 people per square mile lived long the St. Croix River or on the surrounding ridges.²⁵

As the oldest and largest religious group, Methodists could meet in class or prayer meetings and congregations throughout the parish without having to travel more than a few miles--albeit on poor and hilly roads.²⁶ In 1861, all of the parish (see Figure 1) belonged to the St. Stephen and Milltown circuits, except for the southeast corner towards the mouth of the St. Croix. The Ledge--a farming and shipbuilding community of roughly 78 households--had been attached to the St. David's circuit. A few individuals in this community were still members in St. Stephen, and may have lived on the Ledge road.²⁷ Four miles up river, the

²⁵ T.W. Acheson, "A Study in the Historical Demography of a Loyalist County", Histoire Sociale/Social History, April 1968, p. 58; Population and Other Statistics of the Province of New Brunswick, 1851 (Fredericton: J. Simpson, 1851); Wynn, p. 162.

²⁶ The geography of other religious groups is so essential to explaining proselytism, declension, and incipient ecumenicism in local communities that its discussion is deferred to Chapter Six.

²⁷ In addition to the three directories cited in Chapter One, the 1872 Ledge assessment (RS148|C14 PANB) helped in identifying this group. Estimates of total households and the descriptions of places and distances within the parish are based on census returns and directories, anecdotal information from the family histories cited in Chapter One, as well as sources referred to in subsequent footnotes.

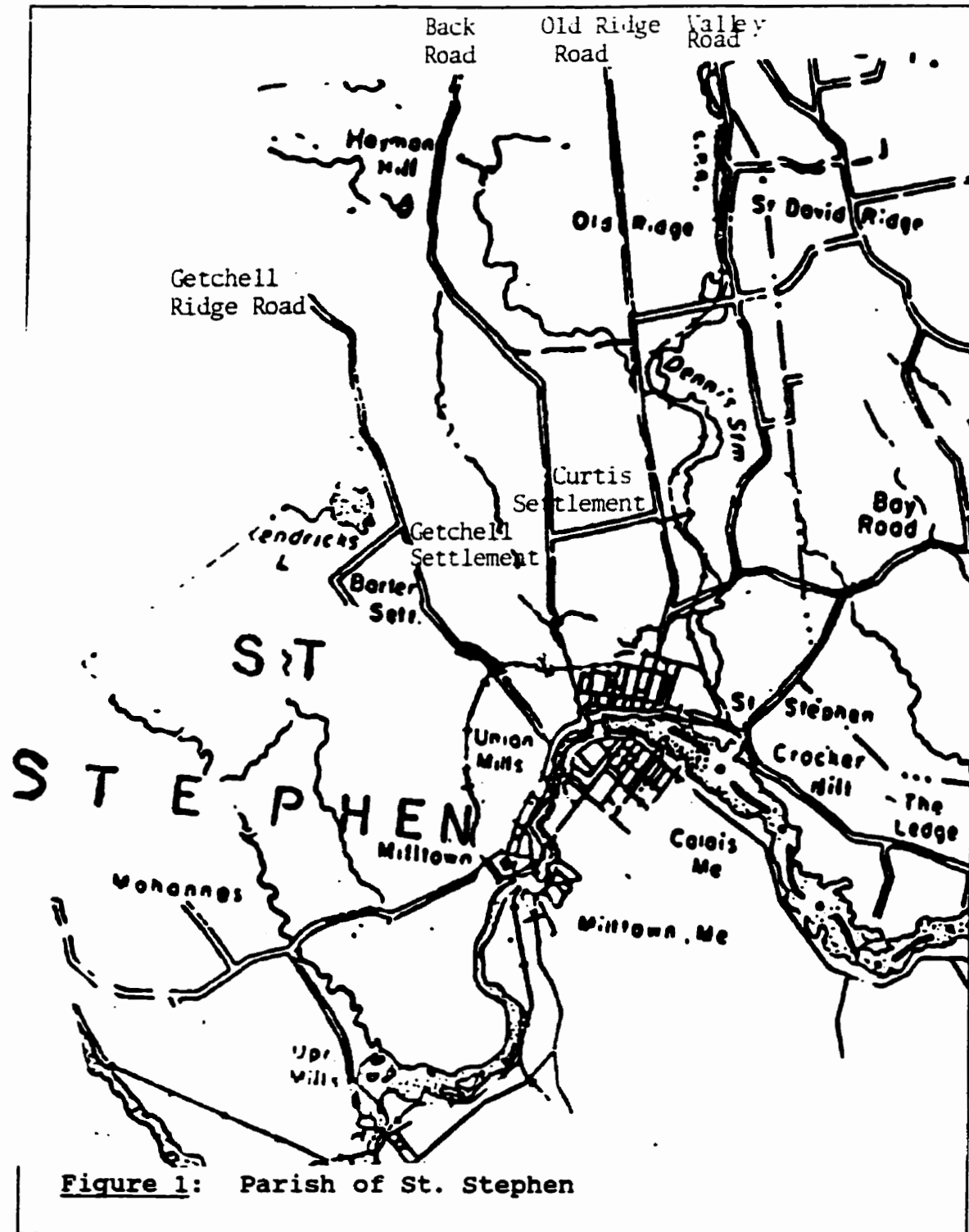


Figure 1: Parish of St. Stephen

village of St. Stephen by 1861 contained a hotel, a bank, 60 stores, and an estimated 263 households. Just before the incorporation of St. Stephen into a town in 1871, the Methodist Society replaced its wooden chapel with a larger brick church. Built in a reportedly modest Gothic style by both hired and donated labour, the new church had a gallery for the choir and organist and 76 pews, which could seat roughly 400. The number of class meetings in the village of St. Stephen ranged from two permanent meetings, to between one and three others in revival years.²⁸

Although the village of St. Stephen included the brickyard and trades associated with shipping and shipbuilding, lumber dominated the villages up river, built around the parish's 18 saw mills.²⁹ A Methodist minister stationed there in the early 1850s, Robert Cooney had denounced:

the speculative and sharp practice of the merchants and manufacturers; the prevalence of profane and vulgar habits...the flagrant violation of the Sabbath up the river, at the booms, and in the mills; and the unscriptural and infidel opinions entertained by a great many.

He further claimed that "usury, smuggling and extortion" were not only "common in the trading part of the community, but not uncommon even in some churches."³⁰ James Taylor,

²⁸ Davis, p. 159; TPW, 12 October 1870, p. 1 col. 5; SSMR.

²⁹ Lovell, pp. 368, 147, 381.

stationed there in the early 1870s, was more tolerant of the "active and clever" owners, or perhaps described a changed business culture:

Mills to the front of us; mills to the right of us; mills to the left of us. In carriage, reining fast horses; at desk, scanning 'prices' and 'freights'; on wharf, and lumber yard, are to be seen mill owners. At slip and boom, pond and platform; by quickly marching "up and downs", and whizzing, buzzing, revolving circulars, are mill men....We wish them success--the "hands" "a good lay"--the owners, quick sales and good returns.³¹

Milltown circuit began at the 1861 enumeration boundary between the lower and upper districts, roughly halfway along the two miles between St. Stephen and Milltown at a junction of roads. In 1861, Middle Landing or Union Mills was still a distinct place, a cluster of houses, farm buildings, artisans' shops, saw mills and wharfs.³² With an estimated 81 households, Union Mills hosted one of the few remaining Methodist house churches. Held at the home and shop of the leader James Crosset, a carriage maker, a local class meeting persisted until the early 1870s. However, the "early candlelight" prayer meeting, probably held in the school

³⁰ Robert Cooney, Autobiography of a Wesleyan Methodist Missionary (Montreal: E. Pickup, 1856), pp. 162 and 166.

³¹ TPW, 20 April 1874, p. 2 cols. 4-5.

³² Map of St. Stephen and Calais from an Actual Survey by O. S. Osborn, (Philadelphia, E. M. Woodford, 1856), PANB; Provincial Patriot and St. Stephen Banner, 6 June 1853, p. 2 col. 3; 2 September 1853, p. 2 col. 5.

house, does not appear to have been regularly held after the 1860s, except in 1876.³³

By 1861, Milltown itself showed the signs of early industrialization: two grist mills and nine factories including two machine shops, as well as those involving wood or leather products. With an estimated 220 households in 1861, it was almost as large as St. Stephen. Milltown Methodists had repainted their church in 1855 and upgraded its interior to convey the impression of "panelled and highly finished wainscot". However, slower growth and weaker finances prevented them from replacing their wooden chapel during the following decades. If the proportion of pews to seating was similar to that in St. Stephen, the 50 pew Milltown church might have seated at least 250 at services.³⁴

Five miles up river, an estimated 84 households lived in Upper Mills in 1861.³⁵ The earliest extant membership

³³ Comments in local membership records and the statistics for 'preaching places' noted in district and conference returns helped clarify which places held services other than class meetings.

³⁴ Census of the Province of New Brunswick, (Saint John: George W. Day, 1861); Hutchinson's New Brunswick Directory for 1865-66; TPW, 16 August 1855, p. 2 col. 2; Milltown circuit pew records survive erratically for 1846 to 1866.

³⁵ In addition to the 1865 directory, the Upper Mills District 1861 assessment (RS148|C14, PANB) helped identify the households in both Upper Mills and Mohannas.

records list only two members meeting with the minister in 1849, and until the late 1850s preaching services were a "novelty in that part of the circuit". Given their reported success and size, these services and the Methodist sponsored 'union' Sunday School of over 80 children and youth probably met initially in the schoolhouse. As the following chapters will show, this Methodist community was one of the most successful in terms of church growth, and in 1869 built a wooden chapel roughly half the size of the St. Stephen church.³⁶

By mid-century five roads ran north from the villages along the St. Croix river. As one traveller observed, although the valleys in between, often stony or of heavy clay, were "still in wilderness or a swamp", nearly all the hill tops were occupied by farming and lumbering families.³⁷ An estimated 112 households lived on the three roads that ran north from the village of St. Stephen. There were no separate class meetings for the smaller number on the Valley Road along the eastern parish border, but Methodists on the Old Ridge road had built a chapel in 1851 with 38 pews shared by families and four free pews at the front.

³⁶ MTMR; TPW, 15 May 1856, p. 2 cols. 5-6; SJDM, 1869; SCC, 17 June 1869, p. 2 col. 4.

³⁷ J. F. W. Johnston, Volume 1 of Notes on North America, Agricultural, Economical and Social (Edinburgh: Wm Blackwood and Sons, 1851), p. 162.

There the minister preached every week to "a good congregation", but led only one, albeit large, class meeting.³⁸ Of the two settlements on the Back Road, only that closest to St. Stephen contained a separate Society within the St. Stephen circuit.³⁹ Its residents probably attended church in St. Stephen (only one family, none of whom were members, ever rented a pew at Old Ridge), but from 1875 to 1876 a preaching service or prayer meeting appears to have been attempted. Referred to variously as Hanson or Hall or Curtis settlement, this place sustained a tiny class meeting essentially drawn from these three families. Members from the first two (who were interrelated descendants of early settlers) and an Irish immigrant, Margaret Douglas, met with English immigrants Mary and William Curtis in their home. Although William Curtis had led the class in the 1840s and 1850s, he retired in 1861, remaining a member; in the following decades, the minister led the class meeting.⁴⁰

³⁸ Proceedings of the Building Committee and of the Trustees of the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel at the Old Ridge, St. Stephen, 1851; SSMR; TPW, 26 December 1860, p. 2 col. 4.

³⁹ Methodist adherents in Hayman's Hill may have attended services in St. James, but no Hayman appears as a member in either parish during the 1850s and 1860s (when St. James belonged to the St. Stephen circuit).

⁴⁰ This profile is drawn from SSMR, census returns; Hanson Family History; 'Eben Hall', SCC, 1 October 1908, p. 1 col. 2.

Getchell Ridge Road ran northwest from Union Mills to Getchell Settlement, originally settled by pre-Loyalist families from Machias, Maine. Nearby Barter Settlement was the only new settlement in the parish established by British immigrants. Richard Barter, an English Methodist immigrant, came to the parish in the late 1820s and "built his camp in the woods about 2 miles from Milltown". Others joined him, "a revival commenced... and a Society was organized, of which Brother Barter was appointed leader". By 1861, the settlements contained roughly 48 households, and the Milltown Methodist minister preached in Getchell Settlement every fourth Sunday, and in Barter Settlement every alternate Tuesday. By 1870 he preached in the former biweekly, and only "occasionally" in the latter; however, two brothers led regular prayer meetings in the local schoolhouse.⁴¹

The road to Mohannas Settlement ran northwest from Upper Mills for two miles. With only 36 households in 1861, Mohannas never sustained more than a small and tenuous class meeting. Robert Cooney, that severe critic of the mill villages, had met them every three weeks and recorded in 1850 that they had "done so little, that unless they promise

⁴¹ D. M. L. Dougherty, A History of Getchell Settlement-Mayfield (privately printed c. 1988); TPW, 30 January 1867, p. 2 cols. 1-2; MTMR; Getchell Family history.

to do something more, I shall not visit them so frequently". In 1859 the minister met six members once a month after preaching at the farm of William and Piety Libby, like the Getchells descendants of the Machias settlers. In 1870, the preaching "service was reportedly given up because of its nearness to Upper Mills", and apparently not revived except briefly in 1876.⁴²

A final 'place' and group of Methodists must be recognized as a part of the experience of the St. Stephen and Milltown circuits. By the early 1850s, five bridges marked the physical and social links between the parish of St. Stephen and Maine. One of the two bridges between Calais and the village of St. Stephen was 'free'; the other and those at Union Mills, Milltown, and Upper Mills were toll bridges. Although both Calais and Milltown, Maine contained Methodist Episcopal churches, Methodism in the latter lapsed in the 1850s, with the result that some residents joined or rented pews in the Wesleyan churches, a few remaining even after the organizational revival of Methodism on the Maine side. Upper Mills, where the Canadian soil was reputedly better, developed more than its Maine counterpart Baring, and its Methodist community included both members and layleaders from the American side. Particularly before

⁴² MTMR; Charles T. Libby, The Libby Family in America (Portland, Maine: B. Thurston & Co., 1882), pp. 71 and 142.

Confederation, circuit accounts reflected both sides' currencies, and events such as revival, missionary or sabbath school meetings were occasions for Wesleyan and Methodist Episcopal collaboration. After "three cheers...for the Queen and Constitution", the doxology and benediction, one such gathering dispersed "fully satisfied that it was good for brethren to dwell together in unity".⁴³

The combined class meetings of a particular place formed the Methodist 'Society', the organizational unit between the class meeting and the circuit. In Wesleyan tradition, the Society of Methodist members met four times a year, remaining after a public Sunday evening service. Its principal object was "the spiritual edification of the Church, by exhortation on the part of the minister", and a reading of the General Rules, but it could also encourage "decision of character" by so obviously distinguishing the hearers and members. It is not clear how this tradition fared in the Eastern British American Conference. In the early 1850s, the New Brunswick District reported that in some years society meetings were held irregularly, and that outside towns they served no useful purpose, since most rural societies consisted of one class, often met by the

⁴³ Provincial Patriot and St. Stephen Banner, 1 July 1853, p. 2 col. 3; Hutchinson's New Brunswick Directory for 1865-66; Knowlton, pp. 39-40; TPW, 28 September 1859, p. 2 col. 4.

minister. An 1861 article in the Wesleyan claimed that increased ministerial responsibilities left insufficient time for preparing "society addresses": "the meetings cannot, therefore, be so frequent in the second century of our existence as they were in the first." Nevertheless, the writer extolled the merits of society meetings, and urged Methodists not to abandon them.⁴⁴ Since despite its description of the love feast, Wilson's handbook made no mention of the society meeting, it had probably disappeared by the 1890s.

The composition of the Society in regional Methodism is also ambiguous. In Wesleyan tradition, the Society was made up of church members some of whom were also lay leaders. The official lay leadership consisted of the Quarterly Board, in Wesleyan tradition reappointed at society meetings, with the exception of trustees who were elected by the Society for life unless they moved away from the circuit.⁴⁵ The entire lay leadership was really broader, including those whose concerns were pastoral--class and prayer meeting leaders or Sunday school teachers--and those whose concerns were administrative--stewards, trustees, Sunday school superintendents, and fundraisers. The class

⁴⁴ Discipline (1874), pp. 55-56; NBDM, 1853; TPW, 1 May 1861, p. 2 cols. 2-4; 8 May 1861, p. 2 cols. 4-6.

⁴⁵ George O. Huestis, pp. 176-91.

leaders, stewards, and trustees were members of the Board, and the latter two groups were also supposed to be members.

In fact, the composition of Quarterly Official Boards demonstrated Methodism's ambivalent ecclesiology, since in Maritime Methodism, some stewards, but more often trustees, were technically only 'hearers'. Nevertheless, clergy recognized both their generally higher social standing and the fact that trustees rather than the Conference held church property and local trust funds. In the conclusion of the 1867 Saint John District Meeting:

As many estimable men not members of our church, are recognized members of the Quarterly meetings in several of our circuits, it would be disastrous...to kindle strife by gratuitously driving from our Quarterly Boards, and alienating from our connexion gentlemen who have held their seats by a presumptive right hitherto unchallenged.

Not all clergy agreed, for attempts made at the 1878 and 1882 General Conferences to acknowledge this officially in the case of trustees did not succeed. This question also arose in relation to Sunday school teachers: they also were supposed to be members, but clergy were authorized to appoint others from the congregation when necessary.⁴⁶

Although incomplete and sometimes cryptic, the records of the Official Boards of the St. Stephen and Milltown circuits illustrate the working of Methodist polity within particular

⁴⁶ SJDM, 1867; NBPEI, 1878; JPGC, 1878, 1882; EBAC, 1866.

places.⁴⁷ Although the two Boards met quarterly, they were appointed annually.⁴⁸ Although in some years, their members appear to have been appointed from within or by the Quarterly Board, the 1877 minutes for St. Stephen explicitly referred to nominations by the minister and their election by the 'Society'. The implications of quarterly collections for the support of the minister are ambiguous: sometimes listed in circuit accounts under the heading of 'public collections', these may have been collections at a service preceeding a society meeting, or they may suggest that the society could include the regular congregation. In St. Stephen at least, there may have been another organizational layer between the membership and the congregation: in 1867, the St. Croix Courier (henceforth Courier) announced a meeting of the "St. Stephen Church Society pewholders", although this may have been the Presbyterian editor's interpretation of an announced fundraising meeting for the proposed new church. The existence of such a layer is also suggested by the ruling of the New Brunswick District in

⁴⁷ These records can be found as segments within microfilmed circuit records held at PANB: for St. Stephen (henceforth SSQOB), there are Minutes of the Official Board for 1862, 1862, 1865, 1866-76, 1876-78 and 1879-81, as well as Trustees' Minutes for 1869, and 1873-80; for Milltown (henceforth MTQOB), 1861, and 1873-79.

⁴⁸ See for example, the minutes of the May 1867 meeting in the St. Stephen circuit, and the June 1874 meeting for Milltown.

1845 that ministers might wear gowns if at least two thirds of both the Society and the congregations approved.⁴⁹

Local records regularly referred to the "Society Stewards" of each place within the circuit. Although most stewards were also church members, for a few years Curtis Settlement, St. Stephen, and Milltown were each represented by two men, one of whom was a member, the other not. The two men from the latter villages were husbands of longtime church members, but never members themselves. In Milltown, Stephen Harmon seems to have accepted the narrowest definition of the church as the Society, for in 1875 he resigned from his positions as Recording Steward and trustee, because "not being a member of the Church he did not deem himself a suitable person to hold these offices". The minutes then stated that the Board of that year "concurred in his views", but Harmon returned a few years later as a Society steward. Another layman, Robert Ray, had joined a class meeting in an 1864 St. Stephen revival, ceased his membership and moved to Milltown, where he joined another meeting in 1870. His attendance was again shortlived, and subsequent ministers were at pains as to how to classify him, suggesting that Ray, who remained on the Board, did not consider the Society the equivalent of the church. He was variously referred to as an 'honorary

⁴⁹ SCC, 17 May 1867, p. 2 col. 2; NBDM, 1845.

member' or a member on trial, dropped in one year or simply not counted in others. He either rejoined a class meeting at the end of the decade or succeeded in persuading the ministers that he was a member of the church. In all, 14 male adherents (mainly from the two rural places on the St. Stephen circuit) were trustees or stewards between 1860 and 1881 without ever having joined the church, and another three were no longer members at the time of their appointments. Moreover, as Chapter Six will elaborate, Old Ridge was a prototype of the union church, or the church in the truly latitudinarian sense. Five members of the Quarterly Official Board at Old Ridge--trustees or congregational stewards--were Anglicans.⁵⁰ Most of the few studies of lay leadership in nineteenth century North America focus on their social status or involvement outside churches rather than their backgrounds and roles within, but one study has also found multiple denominational affiliations among local political and religious elites.⁵¹

⁵⁰ This use of 'Anglican' is anachronistic, but more recognizable than 'Episcopalian' and more concise than 'adherents of the Church of England'.

⁵¹ Kathleen Smith Kutolowski, "Identifying the Religious Affiliations of Nineteenth-Century Local Elites", Historical Methods Newsletter, Vol. 9 No. 1 (December 1975) pp. 9-10.

Not surprisingly, lay leaders involved mainly in pastoral concerns were always Methodist adherents, and with the exception of a few Sunday school teachers, always members.⁵² Methodism cultivated its future pastoral leaders--whether lay or clerical-- by teaching them both "fervour and fluency" in the class meeting. As expressed by one 1857 writer from the neighbouring parish of St. David, lay Methodists did not have to "bury their extemporaneous talents".⁵³ Revival accounts and obituaries also refer to lay involvement in leading prayer meetings and revival services.⁵⁴ A few years after he led a major revival in St. Stephen, Edwin Evans published a treatise on the early Church, defending Methodism's tradition of lay leadership while ignoring the role of women.⁵⁵ In theory, class leaders were also members of the Official Board, but women leaders

⁵² Unfortunately, there are no surviving systematic lists of teachers, so this conclusion is based on names gleaned from membership records, Board minutes, or obituaries.

⁵³ TPW, 1 February 1865, p. 2 cols. 3-4; 6 April 1878, p. 2 cols. 1-2; 27 August 1857, p. 2 col. 1; See also Atkinson, Ch. 17.

⁵⁴ TPW, 13 March 1873, p. 1 col. 5; 16 March 1883, p. 6 cols. 2-3; 'Eliza Creighton', SCC, 26 September 1879, p. 5 col. 4; 'John Veazy', SCC, 17 March 1910, p. 1 col. 1; Getchell Family History; SSQOB, 1877.

⁵⁵ Edwin Evans, The Origins of the Organization and Government in the Early Church being the 6th Annual Lecture before the Theological Union of Mount Allison Wesleyan College (Saint John, N.B.: J. and A. McMillan, 1884).

appear only once in surviving Board records from the 1860s and 1870s: in St. Stephen, at the discussion of church union in 1874 (at this time Milltown had no female leaders). This point, and the fact that men were underrepresented among church members (limiting the number who might have become trustees or stewards) anticipates the major theme of part three of this thesis: the different patterns of male and female church involvement. According to the Wesleyan, there were comparatively fewer local preachers in Maritime Methodism than in Great Britain.⁵⁶ In St. Stephen, circuit records identify only one 'local preacher' during these decades. Daniel Chaise or Chase, a blacksmith in Baring, began as a Sunday school superintendent and organizer of the new Upper Mills church, and by the early 1870s was listed as a local preacher. However, he either remained only a 'hearer' or joined an American church, for his name disappears from both membership and Board records even though he lived in Baring until his death.⁵⁷

The Official Board also exercised pastoral responsibilities. According to Wesleyan tradition, they received the reports of class leaders on the spiritual state of the membership, and local minutes occasionally refer to

⁵⁶ TPW, 8 September 1877, p. 4 cols. 1-2.

⁵⁷ MTMR; SCC, 17 June 1869, p. 2 col. 4; 'Daniel Chase', 19 March 1885, p. 3 col. 6.

general conversation on "the state of the circuit". In theory, the Conference's Stationing Committee determined ministerial assignments to circuits. However, Robert Wilson wrote in a retrospective of Maritime Methodism that:

Men have been forced out of active work because Quarterly Boards have ignored their ability, knowledge, and proven ability and usefulness, and sought for men whose greatest recommendation was their youth.⁵⁸

Milltown Board minutes, which for this period date only from 1873 to 1879, show the Board inviting one minister to the circuit, asking him to remain for a third year, and quarrelling with his successor who lasted only one year. In both the 1860s (before lay representation on Conference committees) and the next decade, the Board minutes for the St. Stephen circuit record invitations to ministers to come to or remain on the circuit, although in 1874 the Board relaxed its reins enough to vote with one abstention "That the choice of a minister for this circuit for the next term be left to the Conference and to God."

Although all charges against ministers were supposed to be dealt with by formal Conference procedures, the Official Board also functioned as a first court for allegations of ministerial misconduct. Beginning in June 1866, the St. Stephen circuit was served by Alexander B. Black, whose work

⁵⁸ Robert Wilson, Methodism in the Maritime Provinces (Halifax: S. F. Huestis, 1893), p. 11.

was satisfactory enough for the Board to invite him to remain for a third year. However, "certain charges of improper conduct" were laid against Black during his final year in St. Stephen. The "official members of that circuit" made "an informal enquiry (sic) into the truth", and concluded that Black was "entirely innocent". The Saint John District Meeting agreed, but regretted that a proper investigation had not been made the instant the charges had been made public. Black spent the next year stationed in Newport, Nova Scotia, and in 1870 the Halifax District dealt with charges against Black "damaging to his ministerial and moral character". At this point, Black resigned from the ministry. Yet despite the charges, some members from the Newport circuit published a statement of praise and thanks to Black for his service. Whether the two circuits were divided in their reaction to his personality or the evidence against him, or divided in their judgment of the propriety of something he said or did, the controversy must have damaged the morale and church unity prized so much by Methodist clergy.⁵⁹

The chief business of the Official Board was financial. The Boards appointed a 'Poor Steward' who together with the minister saw that the offerings from monthly communion and

⁵⁹ SJDM, 1869; Journal, EBAC, 1870; TPW, 20 July 1870, p. 3 col. 1.

quarterly lovefeasts were distributed to the poor in the community.⁶⁰ The Society and circuit stewards kept track of local expenses and contributions as well as the support of the minister and the Conference. In Wesleyan tradition, weekly class and quarterly ticket money from members according to their ability to pay was supposed to guarantee regular support for the ministry. However, in the words of the editor of the Wesleyan, although "this system" seemed "to work upon the whole well in England" (where Wesleyanism has been judged by historians as the most middleclass strain of Methodism), ministers in the Eastern British American Conference preferred "to have the Class Meeting dissociated as far as possible from all questions of mere finance." He argued that opponents of Methodism misrepresented the class meeting, preventing some from joining, and that sometimes "poor people and persons in quite moderate circumstances with large families" were unwilling to "confess their poverty". Similarly, although regretting that the practice of raising part of the church's income by class and ticket money was not more generally observed, the 1862 meetings of the Saint John District and the Eastern British America Conference voted against making special visits to families in order to gather contributions for the support of the church. According to an 1871 series on the problems of

⁶⁰ TPW, 7 November 1879, p. 5 col. 2; SSQOB and MTQOB.

church finance, class and ticket money was collected in towns and cities, but not in country circuits.

This same article stated that only a small proportion of members were able to contribute beyond the support of the minister to Methodism's special funds. These funds assisted poorer circuits, aided ministers in financial crises arising from illness, paid for the schooling of ministers' children, and pensioned those retired from active ministry.⁶¹ Both T. Watson Smith and Robert Wilson's retrospectives of Methodism in the region repeated a charge found occasionally in the Wesleyan: that the long dependence on the English Conference had hindered the development of strong lay financial support for the ministry in comparison with other parts of Canada. However, one probably lay writer from Saint John denied that the membership of the region were less generous.⁶² Whether caused by the attitudes of lay Methodists towards supporting the church or by their limited means, the result was that many ministers lived on credit while circuits carried debts or required subsidies from the

⁶¹ TPW, 16 October 1872, p. 2 col. 1; SJDM and EBAC, 1862; TPW, 27 September 1871, p. 2 col. 3; See the series by former Milltown minister William Wilson on 'Methodism as a System', from 19 May 1869 to June 16 in TPW, unfortunately uncompleted before his death.

⁶² T. Watson Smith, II, pp 434-35; Wilson, Methodism in the Maritime Provinces, p. 16; TPW, 8 November 1871, p. 2 cols. 3-4.

regional or English Conference.⁶³

The St. Stephen and Milltown circuit records support this summary.⁶⁴ In 1859, the outgoing minister recorded that "all the classes pay ticket money except Mohannas and Upper Mills", and that Sunday collections were taken weekly in Milltown and quarterly elsewhere. However, the 1878 Milltown class list--the only one clearly indicating ticket money--shows that not all individuals in each class contributed (those that did gave 25 cents, but whether per quarter or per year was not specified). In general, between 1861 and 1881 the Old Ridge class meeting very rarely collected money, and the Curtis Settlement and Union Mills class meetings never did so. The few records that survive separating givings by class suggest an average per member over three months that ranged between roughly 4 and 30 cents. This did not mean that no member substantially supported the church, but rather that those who did contributed through public collections, subscriptions and donations, or pewrents. The amounts of the first two

⁶³ In addition to the previous references, see TPW, 8 September 1862, p. 2 cols. 1-2; 15 September 1869, p. 2 cols. 3-4; 13 September 1871, p. 2 col. 2; 20 September 1871, p. 2 cols. 2-3; T. Watson Smith, II, p. 453.

⁶⁴ Financial information about the circuits can be found in District and Conference Minutes as well as local records: in addition to the Board Minutes cited earlier, see for St. Stephen, Circuit Accounts 1861-71, and 1877-81; for Milltown, Circuit Accounts, 1861-73, and 1879-81.

categories varied according to season, year, and place: the Old Ridge congregation collected money only four times a year until 1872 when it began collections at Sunday services. A circuit year began in June: generally the first and third quarters showed the lowest givings--representing perhaps the pre-harvest and the end of winter shortages of disposable food, lumber, or income; the second and fourth quarters were generally higher, representing the post-harvest period and the fact that during the months prior to the annual district meetings and in some years the removal of the minister, stewards urgently gathered as much as they could from subscriptions and donations.

Pew records have survived only for the Old Ridge and Milltown churches, and their information is incomplete. Both churches began with free pews at the front, the first fundraiser occurring with the selling of pews at the church's opening: in Old Ridge in 1851, in Milltown in 1846. In the case of Old Ridge, the free pews were also quickly rented; indeed, unless some of the Old Ridge hearers shared their pews, it is difficult to see how some of the members could have attended church. Abner Hill Sen., a founder of Milltown Methodism who became a wealthy supporter, had bought and donated most of the church's pews in 1846. The only regular records, from the late 1850s to the mid 1860s,

show that although technically the free pews consisted of three in the front and three in the back, the church never succeeded in renting all of the remainder, leaving between 8 and 10 essentially free pews. The records also suggest that some attempted to 'rent' pews, but that if they could not contribute all they intended to, they nevertheless remained in that pew. The pew rents offered by members and hearers ranged from 50 cents to \$5, and included barter: for the year 1861/62 an apprentice blacksmith, Robert Ray, paid in wood and stonemason Samuel Nelson paid by chopping it.

In the early 1860s, both circuits required subsidies from the Conference; by 1870 both were independent, although Milltown would soon fall into difficulties. It is interesting that the St. Stephen circuit (which at this time was still collecting only four times a year from its rural congregation) was considered a "wealthy" circuit by one writer in the Wesleyan; admittedly, he had not yet served that circuit, an experience which might have changed his mind. In fact, St. Stephen owed its relative financial stability to one church member, Zechariah Chipman. Chipman had come to St. Stephen as a young merchant in 1837, eventually adding shipbuilding, shipping, banking, railroads, steamboats and cotton to his business interests. However disapproving he might have been of Chipman's

"mansion" or the splendid weddings he provided for his daughters, even Duncan McColl could not have denied Chipman's generosity. Chipman was a major donor to the church, paying the largest part of the circuit's rebuilding costs, and carrying a variety of circuit debts, clearing them all shortly before his death in 1883.⁶⁵

Although sustained by trust funds and a few wealthy widows, Milltown circuit lacked anyone comparable to Chipman. As a result of a schism in 1845, the descendants of its wealthier founders had, for the most part, become Congregationalists or Universalists, and no new businessmen had replaced them. By the mid 1870s, the circuit's ongoing financial problems became critical in a new economic context. The changes in the parish after 1871 have been described as a "transition from an imperial to a national economy", a shift from an economy based on ships and lumber, to one based on railroads and manufacturing industries. By the mid 1860s a carding mill and a match factory were in operation, followed in the next decade by a candy factory and a soap factory. The shipbuilding industry on the New Brunswick side of the river had declined after 1865, and ceased altogether in St. Stephen after 1878. The depression

⁶⁵ SJDM, 1861-74; TPW, 25 October 1871, p. 2 col. 4; 26 December 1860, p. 2 col. 2; SCC, 11 July 1872, p. 2 col. 2; SSQOB and Circuit Accounts; 'Zechariah Chipman', SCC, 18 October 1883, p. 2 col. 1.

in the lumber industry after 1874 resulted in drastic wage cuts, unemployment, and a greater dependence on subsistence farming in rural areas.⁶⁶

Both circuits not only suffered from reduced collections, but also incurred building debts from repairing or replacing churches damaged by fire or storms. However, since most Milltown Methodists were "dependent upon the mills", their circuit declined drastically.⁶⁷ As early as 1874, the circuit had not been able to raise all of the minister's salary, and during the term of W. W. Percival, the Board became involved in a long financial battle with the Conference over the inappropriate and apparently illegal use of trust funds to help meet the deficiency. Percival received \$640 of this money, but noted in his final accounting that he still had not been paid in full. At the same time, the Board minutes hint at a division within the circuit: apparently Upper Mills and Mohannas were able to keep up givings in proportion to what was expected from them (the formula for this was never specified). Since these two places should have been as badly affected by the lumber depression as other parts of the circuit, and were by no means as developed as Milltown, it is tempting to speculate

⁶⁶ Acheson, "Denominationalism", pp. 238, 168, 224; Davis, pp. 224, 249, and 256.

⁶⁷ TPW, 21 November 1874, p. 3 col. 1; 2 March 1878, p. 2 col. 5; 7 September 1878, p. 4 col. 4.

that Upper Mills Methodists were more generous. However, as the following chapters will show, Methodism in both these places had very few organizational rivals, and could draw financial support from a much broader community than could the Methodist church in Milltown itself.⁶⁸

This division must have been accentuated when Percival's successor proved to be popular in Upper Mills, but less so in Milltown. Although the evidence concerning the conflict concerns only a few lay leaders, one can also speculate that Milltown's congregational temper may have been less congenial to the new minister. Described in his obituary as "earnest, humble, aggressive", and "eccentric", Samuel R. Ackman was compared to Billy Bray, a fellow native of Cornwall who was a noted Bible Christian folk preacher. According to David Luker, Wesleyan Methodists in parts of Cornwall far exceeded the sectarians in their religious enthusiasm.⁶⁹ A lecture given by Ackman in St. Stephen on "The Greatness of England" gives some hint of his personality and his economic views: with "flashes of wit and humour", he "dwelt upon the land question and seemed to hint that in the course of events present monopolies would have to give way." Early in the circuit year, Ackman

⁶⁸ MTQOB, 1874-78; SSDM, 1880.

⁶⁹ Minutes, Nova Scotia Conference of the Methodist Church of Canada (henceforth NSC), 1913; Luker, p. 613.

recommended that the Milltown circuit become officially 'dependent', prompting a firm letter to the Wesleyan from the Board rejecting the suggestion. Ackman, in turn, acknowledged the "pleasing" commitment, but summarized the difficulties:

Although the day was, when this section of our fair province resounded with the din of Mill operations...today, there is a death-like silence along the river St. Croix, that chills the heart of the men, who are willing to toil, but...lacking the common necessaries of life.

Ackman then stated that part of the money owed to Percival had been made up by \$440 from a now nonexistent investment fund, and that whatever the writers' good intentions, he had no hope of being paid in full.⁷⁰ Ackman's eventual salary included \$260 from the disputed trust funds, the same amount voted by the Upper Mills trustees to him in 1879, triggering a typically vague local conflict. He determined to keep the money, although asked by the circuit steward James Crosset to return it. W. S. Robinson, a Milltown trustee and class leader, supported Crosset, arguing that the action of the Upper Mills trustees had been illegal, since it had occurred at a meeting of which the Milltown trustees had received no notice. Then, in the words of the Recording Steward:

Bro. Crosset and Bro. Ackman got into a dispute--about matters concerning themselves--which lasted fully one hour and a half

⁷⁰ TPW, 25 January 1877, p. 2 col. 4; MTQM, 1878; TPW, 24 August 1878, p. 5 col. 3; 7 September 1878, p. 4 col. 4.

ending just about where they had begun. Some of the brethren got weary and went home.

After Crosset's departure, the Recording Steward's refusal to sign the accounts, and the resignation of Ackman as chairman of board, the meeting broke up unadjourned at two a.m.⁷¹

In 1880, the District Meeting appointed Howard Sprague (by then at St. Stephen), another minister, and the St. Stephen Steward John Veazy to investigate the general subject of Milltown finances. Revealing the misuse of the trust funds, they also reported that the recent amalgamation of the Milltown trustees in response to provincial legislation had been illegal, since not all trustees had been given written notice of the relevant meeting. The issue of the trust funds came to the attention of the Conference after Ackman left, and remained unresolved, disappearing from the Journals after 1882. Both the ministers and the Milltown lay leadership refused to replace the money, and perhaps neither was even able to do so. Over a decade later, the issue still rankled, even though its exact history had faded. Percival, a popular temperance activist, had been regarded with much sympathy during his stay because of the deaths of three of his children. Yet on learning of Percival's move to the Presbyterians in 1887,

⁷¹ Journal, NBPEIC, 1880; MTQM, 1879.

the circuit officials of that year hoped that he had "refunded to the Conference the \$640 of the trust funds which he most unrighteously appropriated while on this circuit some nine years ago."⁷²

A thorough consideration of the relationship of economic context and social class to church involvement and church finances must wait for larger treatment. But a few points can be made here. Without precise comparison of the social status of members and nonmembers, it is impossible to determine whether the expectation that members should support the church effectively denied poor Methodists a free choice in their involvement. The range of amounts collected from various class meetings or congregations within the parish and the fact that ticket money was so rarely collected suggest that this expectation may only have hindered some rather than blocked many from joining the church. An impressionistic survey of the occupations of the circuits' lay leadership suggests that it included men from varied social origins, but of higher economic status than the range within the membership, particularly in the case of trustees. This parallels findings of other studies, but in the case of Methodism in St. Stephen, New Brunswick, most of its lay leaders were not businessmen such as Chipman or

⁷² SSDM, 1880; Journal, NBPEIC, 1880-82; MTQM, 1876; SCC, 10 January 1878, p. 2 cols. 1,6; TPW, 2 March 1878, p. 5 col. 2; 6 June 1887, p. 5 col. 1.

Harmon but artisan proprietors or farmers.⁷³

In fact, the difficulties both circuits had in keeping solvent and their reliance on a few wealthy contributors should qualify the historiographical image of late nineteenth century Protestant churches: although the St. Stephen church was more affluent than before, the circuits were not necessarily economically secure. The two circuits' building efforts arose as much from fire or storm related damage and the absence of insurance until the late 1870s as from expansion or cultural expectations. Although exciting little controversy and not universally adopted, one change in Methodism's temporal polity highlights the pivotal nature of this period in relation to pioneer Methodism and modern church life. In the hope of raising more money, the newly united Wesleyan Methodist Church had urged local Boards to ask for subscriptions from the congregation and adopt the envelope system as the means of collecting them. The St. Stephen and Milltown Boards had already been in the habit of collecting subscriptions, and in 1875 began using envelopes. In only fifteen years, Robert Ray, the 'hearer' who had made his contribution to the church in the form of kindling had

⁷³ Stuart Blumin, "Church and Community: A Case Study of Lay Leadership in Nineteenth-Century America," New York History, 1975, pp. 396, 399; Gregory Levine, "In God's Service: The Role of the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic Churches in the Cultural Geography of Late Nineteenth Century Kingston", (Ph.D. Thesis, Queen's University, 1980), pp. 104-05.

joined the church and become a modern steward, counting and recording weekly envelope offerings.⁷⁴

The place of the two circuits within wider Methodist polity also changed in the 1860s and 1870s. Since 1855, St. Stephen had hosted at least two meetings of the former Saint John District, which involved lengthy public religious services as well as internal business. The two Official Boards sent one and sometimes two members to the financial District meetings (which preceded the general meeting): most often the circuit steward in St. Stephen, a farmer, Timothy Crocker or his successor John Veazy, a shoemaker, but sometimes also Chipman. In 1874, the Official Boards of both circuits had voted in favour of church union, and with the subdivision of the former Eastern British America Conference, St. Stephen and Milltown circuits joined with other Charlotte County circuits in the new St. Stephen District, now part of the New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island Conference. Not surprisingly, the two Boards supported broader lay representation in the new union and would send at least four other men to various regional meetings or committees during the 1870s. In 1874, Chipman was a lay representative to the first General Conference, and Veazy would succeed him in 1878.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ NBPEIC, 1874-75; SSQOB and MTQOB, 1874-81; TPW, 20 April 1874, p. 2 cols. 4-5.

Preoccupied with church union, the first General Conference had not dealt with the place of the class meeting in the new Methodist polity. But in 1878, the Conference considered this question over three days, both apologists and reformers debating what the ecclesiology of traditional Methodism had been and what it should be. From its very first years, Methodism's equation of church membership with attendance at class meetings had been criticized from outside the denomination and debated from within.⁷⁶ The issue had become prominent in the Canada Conference when Egerton Ryerson resigned in 1854 (returning in 1855), after failing to get majority support for his resolution making the class meeting optional. Arguing that "most ministers in the connexion were deeply fearful of the division the projected revision might cause" and "believed it was safer to keep the rules and ignore the practice", Neil Semple has written that "in the 1860s and 1870s attendance at class meetings continued to decline, and discipline was only rarely enforced". Unfortunately, Semple does not document

⁷⁵ SSQOB, MTQOB, 1874; SJDM, 1855-74; NBPEI, 1875-81; SCC, 4 June 1868, p. 2 col. 5.

⁷⁶ Henry D. Rack, "The Decline of the Class-Meeting and the Problem of Church-Membership in Nineteenth-Century Wesleyanism", Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society, XXXIX (February 1973), p. 12; William W. Dean, "The Methodist Class Meeting: The Significance of Its Decline", Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society, XLIII (December 1981), p. 42; TFW, 27 July 1878, p. 2 col. 1.

this from either membership records or subsequent conference or district meetings, so his conclusions may be premature. It is possible that much of the prominence of the debate in the Canada conference simply reflected Ryerson's personality.⁷⁷

Although occasionally raised within the Wesleyan or at district meetings, the question was not debated at the conference level in the Maritimes until 1874. As mentioned earlier, regional clergy appear to have adhered more closely to the rule after 1855 than in the 1840s and early 1850s.⁷⁸ The issue came to the General Conference of 1878 through a "Memorial" from the Halifax District asking the Conference "to define the basis of membership" and a similar resolution from Montreal. The Committee assigned to consider these requests defended the rule, but some Conference delegates disagreed, suggesting various amendments. Despite lengthy debate, all failed by "great majorities".⁷⁹

Whether this decision reflected the general opinion of clerical and lay Methodists is uncertain. One layman from Toronto inquired: "From the 3,000 churches in the land, only 2 small sections had come up asking for a change. Was

⁷⁷ Semple, "The Impact of Urbanization on the Methodist Church in Ontario", pp. 224, 228, 231-32.

⁷⁸ SJDM, 1873; EBAC, 1860.

⁷⁹ JPGC, 1878, pp. 272-73; "Report", 1878.

this a sufficient indication of Methodist sentiment...?" According to one minister, four fifths of the membership attended class, and the remainder: "admit the propriety of the rule; they profess to believe in the duty, but they simply neglect to do it. Scarcely any object to class meetings on principle." But another layman argued the reverse, claiming that "So general had the practice of ignoring the rule become" that the Conference should "ratify by statute what had already become the common law of the church by usage". Two retrospectives on the Conference supported this. One Nova Scotian minister stated in 1879 that relaxing the rule would have been "in accordance with the feeling manifested in the General Conference and with the practice of our Church in the past". An Ontario minister E. H. Dewart wrote in 1891 that: "Though the feeling was strong for some modification of the existing rule, no decisive result was reached. The decision was virtually postponed with the understanding that larger liberty should be given...in dealing with cases of nonattendance".⁸⁰

The debate in 1878 did not question that there should be a distinction between hearers and members, nor did it question the right of the church to exclude individuals from

⁸⁰ "Report", 1878; TPW, 5 July 1879, p. 2 col. 1; E. H. Dewart, "The Methodist Church of Canada", Centennial of Canadian Methodism, p. 141.

membership for obvious breaches of lifestyle or commitment to regular public worship. Moreover, no delegate rejected the class meeting as an institution. Those arguing for revision of the rule claimed that differences of personality (rather than the spirituality) distinguished those who attended class meetings and those otherwise faithful supporters of the church who did not. But essentially, the debate centered on the ambivalent ecclesiology adopted by the first Methodist Conferences: was the church the congregation or the Society? As summarized by one minister, "the original purpose of a class-meeting was to keep together, not the Methodist Church, but a society....When the society became the church, the circumstances altered". The alternatives proposed during the debate reflected attempts to reconcile the latitudinarian and sectarian impulses. All required a member's "life and character" to "be in conformity with the General Rules", and some singled out attendance at Communion. One proposed communicant membership for individuals who would "be regarded as under the special pastoral care of our ministers, to induce them to seek the attainment of higher Christian life and spiritual blessings." In response to the argument that many "take shelter at the Sacrament on the Sabbath from the accusation of God's law broken throughout the week", other

amendments provided for the connection of each member with a spiritual leader, "who would be responsible for his moral and spiritual oversight".⁸¹

Both sides cited the New Testament or John Wesley to support their arguments, and drew on the experience of other Conferences. By 1874, one Australian Wesleyan Conference and the two Methodist Episcopal Churches in the United States (North and South) had abandoned the rule, reportedly without major losses in either the membership or the number of members attending class.⁸² Some contrasted this with the declining membership of the English Conference, allegedly a result of enforcement of the rule. Other observers of American Methodism were more critical: George O. Huestis contended that the relaxation of the rule in the Methodist Episcopal Church had "lessened the piety of its members".⁸³

In St. Stephen and Milltown during the 1860s and 1870s, traditional Methodist spiritual polity appears to have been rarely challenged outside the Official Boards. In 1872, six

⁸¹ "Report", 1878; TPW, 8 August 1874, p. 2 cols. 1-2; JPGC, 1878.

⁸² TPW, 8 August 1874, p. 2 cols. 1-2; a notable exception in New York resulted in the establishment of the Free Methodist Church. According to TPW, 27 July 1878, p. 2 col. 1, the Australasian General Conference of that year reaffirmed the rule, by a small majority.

⁸³ "Report", 1878; TPW, 8 August 1874, p. 2 cols. 1-2; 20 September 1865, p. 2 cols. 5-6; 29 October 1880, p. 4 cols. 1-2; 1 February 1879, p. 6 cols. 1-2.

names from the St. Stephen circuit appeared with the heading that they "considered themselves members of the church and partake of the sacrament but do not meet in class". Two were reclassified as sick, and four were dropped in the following year. In 1881, the Milltown minister noted that some members had "not met in class to my certain knowledge for the last two years and yet they claim a right to membership! This enigma I cannot resolve and will therefore submit it to the opinion of my brethren". Most were subsequently dropped or listed as removed, some of the dropped rejoined later, and a few of the nonattenders must have returned to the class meeting, since notations left by the next minister show that he adhered more firmly to the rule. Yet the 1880s were the final years of this strand of Methodist piety in the parish of St. Stephen. By the early 1890s, both circuits had abandoned the class meeting.

The timing for this fundamental change in local church life appears to have varied within the region as a whole, and the pattern in St. Stephen may well have been early. Although in decline in the Maritimes after 1900, the class meeting was not entirely defunct. In 1901, the New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island Conference reported 177 class leaders and assistants, but only 68 by 1909. In that same year, the Nova Scotia conference reported that 64 out of 110

circuits had no class meetings, and that of the remaining 87 classes, 37 were led by ministers. Officially, Methodism sidestepped the issue at each General Conference until the class meeting finally disappeared with church union in 1925.⁸⁴

Historical explanations for the decline of the class meeting begin with those offered by contemporaries. Often cited was the chronic shortage of lay and talented leaders, probably due to exceptional abilities and personality required and the growing rivals for lay involvement in voluntarist associations. Some linked the original strength of the class meeting to the experience of rapid church growth: the constant infusion of new converts and the distinctiveness of early Methodism. With Methodism's successful growth, class meetings were no longer associated with novelty, persecution no longer fanned the flames of enthusiasm, which had become more socially acceptable and available in other churches.⁸⁵ Others were less sanguine about the progress of Methodism, arguing that the debate simply reflected "decreasing piety". According to George

⁸⁴ I am indebted to Twila Buttimer for the kind loan of her research notes for "Great Expectations: The Maritime Methodist Church and Church Union", M.A. Thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1980, from which this summary was drawn.

⁸⁵ In addition to the articles already cited on the class meeting, see TPW, 9 October 1872, p. 2 cols. 1-2.

Huestis, "The world and formal Christians will tolerate almost anything in religion, but the personal testimony concerning inward experience". Yet a report for the Nova Scotia Conference of 1909 suggested with regret that "the promiscuous meeting in which testimonies are given" had eclipsed the class meeting.⁸⁶

The most specific analyses of the decline of the class meeting come from three twentieth century Methodist church historians. All three identify an early shift from the meeting's original emphasis on specific ethical guidance towards an emphasis on introspection and inward piety that led to "empty formalism". William W. Dean has argued that the critical period in the meeting's decline was the generation after Wesley's death in 1791, when the class meeting's original function of recruitment shifted to the new institutions of the prayer meeting or the revival service. More generally, historians have followed nineteenth century observers in linking the end of the class meeting to the eventual transformation of Methodism from an eighteenth century Society within the Church of England to a church in itself. And, as mentioned in Chapter One (pp. 20-21), the decline of the class meeting has been seen as part of a waning enthusiastic tradition within Methodism.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ "Report", 1878; TPW, 1 February 1879, p. 6 cols. 1-2; NSC, 1909; Minutes, Yarmouth District, 1919.

As Dean's research and the 1909 comment from the Nova Scotian conference suggest, one must be cautious in relating the debate on the class meeting rule to the decline of revivalism in Methodism. One of the rule's critics was Howard Sprague, who from 1868 to 1869 led the largest revival in Milltown's history, establishing several class meetings. At the 1878 debate, Sprague said "he was in favour of preserving the class-meeting" but changing "the test of membership".:

He contended that the New Testament did not impose attendance at class and that it was not esteemed a test of membership by Wesley. He considered that attendance at the Lord's Supper and the performance of other church duties should be the rule by which church membership should be decided.

Sprague observed that since Methodists did not deny the validity of other churches who did not have class meetings, they could not then claim that the class meeting alone was the church. He concluded that changing the rule would not mean "that the doors of the church shall be thrown open to all comers, neither that the class meeting shall be set aside". In sum, the debate of 1878 did not question the importance of deciding to become a member through a distinct psychological process, involving emotional as well as

⁸⁷ David Lowes Watson, The Early Methodist Class Meeting (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1985), pp. 145-47 (although published as a handbook for modern Methodists, this work is based on the author's Ph.D thesis at Duke University); Rack, pp. 12-21; William W. Dean, pp. 41-48.

intellectual factors if not necessarily in the same psychological pattern as experienced by previous generations of converts. Rather, it questioned the wisdom of requiring attendance from those who did not wish to talk about this decision or from those who "did not know what to say different from the weeks before".⁸⁸ As the following chapters will show, it is possible that lay Methodists in St. Stephen implicitly shared this compromise view, by supporting revivals and joining class meetings, but seldom remaining members beyond a few years.

The belief, worship, and polity described in this chapter and that preceding it constituted a context of religious culture within which believers could act as consumers of Methodist tradition even as they adapted it. Free salvation implied choice, full salvation implied effort and reward; the hearer or member could in fact choose one of many levels of association as a part of his or her denominational path. In St. Stephen this spiritual commitment was often separate from financial support which was drawn not from the class meetings as in traditional Wesleyan polity, but from the congregation of both members and hearers who might be Methodists or even nominal adherents of other denominations. Although Wesleyans had retained the most clerically dominated polity within Methodism, the St. Stephen

⁸⁸ "Report", 1878.

experience suggests that local lay leaderships could sometimes exercise considerable de facto power, choosing or not choosing to follow the procedures and rules laid down as Wesleyan tradition. If this was so elsewhere as well, it may add a further explanation for the Wesleyan Conferences' concessions to lay representation in the gradual unification of Methodism. However, despite what George O. Huestis described as the contemporary "outcry against ministerial authority and for more lay influence in Methodism", the regional shortage of lay leaders lamented in annual minutes and the reported inability or unavailability of many to travel to regional meetings may suggest that the Methodist churches in St. Stephen and Milltown were exceptional.⁸⁹

This chapter has also set the stage for comprehending the dynamics and demography of church growth by establishing the importance of place within Methodist polity and the persistence of this sense of place even though only a few miles lay in between Curtis Settlement and Old Ridge or Milltown and Upper Mills. Along with the economic changes that stretched the financial resources of the two circuits, transience, revivalism, and proselytism would redraw the institutional map of local Methodism and repeatedly renumber

⁸⁹ J. Warren Caldwell, "The Unification of Methodism in Canada 1865 - 1884", The Bulletin of the Committee on Archives of the United Church of Canada, (1967), pp. 15-23; TPW, 19 September 1866, p. 2 col. 4.

its hearers and members. Although common occupants of a small and densely settled parish, Methodist congregations and class meetings would not share a common pattern of church growth.

Chapter IV

The Dynamics of Church Growth (1): Transience

Figures have voices in our day.¹

St. Stephen in 1861 was a religiously diverse parish. Although comprising only 26% of the 5,160 residents enumerated that year, Methodist adherents were the single largest religious group. With the mid-century economic recovery, the parish population had grown by 80% since 1851. Yet in 1859,² the combined class meetings within the parish (excluding the Ledge) were only slightly larger than they had been at the beginning of the decade. In fact, the St. Stephen meetings had declined, while those in Milltown had increased.³ Annual totals during the 1860s and 1870s varied more than in the 1850s. Despite the greater number of

¹ TPW, 27 April 1878, p. 4 col. 1.

² Membership records were totaled in June of each year. The St. Stephen and Milltown circuits included parts of St. James parish until 1869, but unless indicated otherwise the figures referred to in the following chapters are based only on Societies within the parish of St. Stephen excluding the Ledge.

³ TPW, 15 May 1856, p. 2 cols. 5-6. Circuit records for the early 1850s were less well kept, but they suggest roughly 79 St. Stephen members and 88 Milltown members in 1851-52, compared with 54 and 123 in 1859.

potential 'hearers', the membership total of 151 in 1867 was below even the 1852 figure (although the later records appear to have been more accurate). The membership peak of 351 in 1874 and subsequent decline mirrored the parish's own shortlived growth. Its population increased by only 26% between 1861 and 1871, and declined by 1881. Yet despite out-migration, revivalism and proselytism brought Methodism a larger share of adherents within the parish: 28 percent of 6,515 in 1871 and 30 percent of 5,899 in 1881.⁴

Although their work uses national aggregate figures, coauthors Robert Currie, Alan Gilbert, and Lee Horsley suggest a useful model for the analysis of local church growth. The previous chapters have essentially described the "cultural" appeal and the "social utility" of a church, which together with a church's "proximity" explain an individual's involvement. The quantitative analysis of this involvement requires the further delineation of the constituencies from which occasional or regular supporters of a particular church come. At the most complex level, churches possess overlapping constituencies that may be ethnic, economic or political and are not easily defined.

⁴ T.W. Acheson, "A Study in the Historical Demography of a Loyalist County", pp. 58-59; Population and Other Statistics of the Province of New Brunswick, 1851 (Fredericton: J. Simpson, 1851); Census of the Province of New Brunswick (Saint John: George W. Day, 1861); Census of Canada, 1871 (Ottawa: I. B. Taylor, 1873); Census of Canada, 1881 (Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co., 1882).

But the most obvious constituencies are the starting point for understanding the dynamics of church growth.

Voluntarist churches suggest a concentric image, with the membership at the center. The membership's most precise internal constituency consists of non-members who have made some other indication of affiliation with that church--such as nominal adherence. The external constituency of both the membership and the internal constituency consists of those who have made none.⁵ Given the multiple denominational affiliations of many St. Stephen families, one can refine this even further by inserting another layer straddling these two constituencies: the apparently never-Methodist individuals residing in families which also included one or more Methodists.⁶ Since this layer may have included 'hearers' or Sunday school students, this chapter's analysis of partly or wholly Methodist families includes Methodists and their co-resident relations, but not nonMethodist employees or boarders residing with these families.

The membership and its two constituencies are directly affected by the obvious factors of population growth, all three by mortality and migration, and the constituencies by

⁵ Currie et al., pp. 6, 54-55.

⁶ Unless qualified, 'Methodist' residents of St. Stephen include sometime church members between 1861 and 1881, adherents in the 1861 or 1871 census, nonadherents who were members in the 1850s, or nonadherent men on the Quarterly Official Boards between 1861 and 1881.

fertility as well. However, these three factors alone directly affect the size of the external constituency, whereas churches in partnership with a sympathetic and responsive laity can directly effect "transfers" to the internal constituency or to the membership.⁷ In the case of Methodism in St. Stephen, where clergy most often reclassified members as hearers after the fact, the laity might be said to more directly effect the transfers away from the membership. Certainly, they effected transfers from the internal to the external constituencies by no longer identifying themselves on census returns as adherents.⁸ The numbers of these transfers measure church involvement, and their relation to these constituencies its rate.

As obvious as this framework is, the nature of most historical evidence of church involvement has precluded its use in analyzing local church growth. The combination of the Canadian census of nominal adherence and Methodist church records for particular places is a happy exception. Of the more complex constituencies of religious groups, the demographic will be considered in part three of this thesis. The chapters on revivalism and proselytism that follow this one consider those aspects of church growth involving

⁷ Currie et al., p. 59.

⁸ However, as Chapter Six will show, a few Methodists resisted analytical tidiness by simultaneously remaining church members and non-adherents.

transfers between the constituencies or to and from the membership. This chapter introduces those that follow by showing how patterns of persistence and transience renumbered the internal constituency of local Methodism, how these patterns compared with those of the parish as a whole, and how they varied within from place to place.

When Methodist clergy considered their denomination's growth, transience was a recurring theme.⁹ With "short seasonal trappings" between livelihoods or small moves within a parish or county, nineteenth century Maritime society had always contained "a certain built in mobility factor".¹⁰ In St. Stephen, the Upper Mills class sometimes suspended its meetings in the winter while its leaders and key members were in the woods. Some church members moved from one circuit or class meeting to another, and census and directory listings show households moving within the parish. Waves of regional out-migration had seriously reduced Methodist congregations throughout the Maritimes in the early 1820s, in the 1840s, and in the last decades of the nineteenth century. In 1882, Methodist clergy in Charlotte County lamented the "constant drain upon our congregations"

⁹ SJDM, 1867, 1869, 1870, 1873; TPW, 13 November 1872, p. 4 cols. 1-3; 15 October 1880, p. 4 cols. 2-3.

¹⁰ Alan A. Brookes, "The Exodus: Migration from the Maritime Provinces to Boston During the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century", (Ph.D. Thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1978), p. 258.

and "the absence of others from their homes for a large part of the year" making "it difficult to bring them into the church or to retain them".¹¹

Patterns of persistence (or survival) and transience within places or social groups can be analyzed by various means. Tracing families beyond a single household or generation stresses social continuity. Of the 844 parish households within the St. Stephen and Milltown circuits in 1861, 313 or 37% were headed by families¹² including one or more Methodists.¹³ Of these 313, 153 or 49% contained two or more relations linked to the parish in 1851.¹⁴ In 1871, 406, or 36% of the 1,128 households within the two circuits, were headed by families containing at least one Methodist.¹⁵ By 1871, only 122 or 30% contained two or more relations linked to 1851. Not surprisingly given the slowed population growth, in 1871 a larger proportion of Methodist families

¹¹ T. Watson Smith, II, pp. 129, 308-09, 318; SSDM, 1882.

¹² Henceforth for brevity, unless otherwise indicated, a 'Methodist family' refers to a partly or wholly Methodist family.

¹³ In 1861, another 17 included Methodist boarders or employees.

¹⁴ Since the St. Stephen 1851 census underenumerated many Methodist families, this includes immediate relations of families found in the 1851 census and church members of the two circuits in 1851.

¹⁵ In 1871, another 30 households contained employees or individuals not identifiable as relations.

had persisted from the previous census return: of the 406, 241 or 59% contained two or more relations linked to the 1861 census.¹⁶ When the 313 Methodist families in 1861 were located in 1871, 233 or 74% were represented by two or more surviving individuals.

In both 1861 and 1871, a small proportion of Methodist families consisted of newcomers or new children and one relation linked to the previous census: 45 or 14% of 313 in 1861; and 53 or 13% of the 406 in 1871. In 1861, 37% of the 313 Methodist families appear to have been almost entirely new to the parish, although 9% included relations linked to other Charlotte County parishes in 1851. By 1871, 28% of the 406 households appear to have been entirely new to the parish since the 1861 census. These patterns can only approximately be compared with those found by Herbert Mays's more documentary method of establishing kinship in Gore. This more newly settled and expanding Ontario township had much higher rates of transience, with 48% of 1861 and 41% of 1871 households unrelated to previous settlers. Nevertheless, his finding that families with deeper roots were less likely to leave the parish was paralleled in St. Stephen. Roughly one fifth of the 313 Methodist families in

¹⁶ Nine individuals not found in both census returns were nevertheless found in membership records for both census years: some were probably away at the time of enumeration; a number came from the Baring, Maine/Upper Mills class and may have moved across the river.

1861 appear to have entirely left the parish by 1871, but these constituted only 12% of the 198 families with a kinship tie to the parish in 1851 compared with 30% of the 115 newcomer families.¹⁷

Measuring the survival or persistence and transience of individuals reveals the diminution and expansion of persisting families as well as individual newcomers to the parish. However, since relatively complete records of death were available only for church members, the proportion of transients is overestimated. Some studies suggest that incorporating or estimating deaths can reduce the overall proportion of transients by between 5 and 12 percent, and even half it for the oldest residents.¹⁸ Of the 1,662 members of the 313 Methodist families in 1861, 579 or 35% were not linked to the 1871 census. These included families who entirely left the parish, but over half of these 579 were survived by or left relations listed in the 1871 census. Of the 1,083 that persisted or survived to the 1871 census, nearly all lived in the 241 Methodist families in 1871 with at least two individuals from the same 1861

¹⁷ Herbert J. Mays, "'A Place to Stand': Families, Land and Permanence in Toronto Gore Township, 1820-1890", Historical Papers, 1980, pp. 185-86, 198.

¹⁸ Michael B. Katz, Michael J. Doucet, Mark J. Stern, The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 109, 410; Pouyez, Roy and Martin, p. 140.

household.¹⁹ The distinctions between relations of persisting residents and completely new families are clearest among the 1,405 Methodists or their co-resident relations who were listed as over the age of 14 in the 1871 census.²⁰ Of this total, 839 or 60% were still resident members of persisting 1861 families, and 51 or 4% were relations of these families, but new or returned to the parish; 53 were the only members of their 1871 family linked to 1861, and 52 were the latter's relations, all apparently new to the parish. Of the remaining 121 employees, boarders, or possible in-laws in 1871 (Methodists or members of a boarding family which included a Methodist), only 28% were linked to 1861. Of this group of 1,405, only 289 or one fifth formed new families without any apparent ties to 1861.

The seemingly transient probably included St. Stephen women who married between census returns, since church and county marriage records were searched primarily for church members. Yet these and family histories proved helpful

¹⁹ Roughly ten percent were either the only 1871 family member linked to the 1861 census, were boarders in 1871, belonged to 1871 families which no longer included Methodist relations, or had moved to the Ledge outside the two circuits.

²⁰ For consistency's sake, this project uses only one age grouping, unless comparison is made with other studies. This lower age boundary was determined by the project's primary concern with church involvement, since simply calculating the age at joining for all new members between 1861 and 1881 showed that few full church members joined before age 15.

enough to considerably reduce differences between the persistence/survival rates of Methodist men and women. Of the 1,740 individuals in the 1861 census who were members of Methodist families or Methodist servants, boarders, or employees, 67% of the men and 61% of the women were found in the 1871 census (5 were illegible in 1861). In 1861, 55% of the men and 53% of the women over the age of 14 were found in the previous census; in 1871 the comparable proportions were 51% and 49%.

Although derived for the analysis of church membership, the age groups for this project correspond closely to those of other Canadian community studies. After establishing the boundary of 14 and under for 'children', information about marital status was used to establish 24 as the upper 'boundary' to youth, since women were the majority of church members and in 1871 half of all St. Stephen women aged 25 were married. Half of all St. Stephen men aged 28 were married; two thirds of St. Stephen women aged 27 and two thirds of men aged 29 were married. These patterns resemble those in Hamilton, where half of the men were married by age 26, and half of the women by age 25. Early and late married life were defined as the next stages of the life course, and age 54 as the boundary with old age, since historians have identified age 55 or over as the most common beginning of

family dissolution in nineteenth century America.²¹

Clerical observers anticipated the conclusion of modern social historians that young adults were the most transient. According to the Milltown Methodist minister in 1856, "at the evening service on the Lord's Day, there are many comparative strangers present, most of whom are young men and young women". The 1882 lament over out-migration quoted earlier also singled out "the removal of our young people to other lands".²² Only 58% of Methodist men aged 15 to 24 and 62% of those aged 25 to 34 in 1861 could be found in the 1871 census, compared with 70% of male children and of men aged 35 to 54.²³ Similarly, for all 1,740 Methodist men and women, the married had the highest rate of persistence (or survival) to 1871: 71%, compared with 63% for the single, and 56% for the widowed.

As these figures suggest, greater proportions of Methodists and their relations in St. Stephen remained in the parish between 1861 and 1871 when compared with the protagonists of other Canadian community studies. The

²¹ Katz et al., pp. 258-59; Howard Chudacoff and Tamara K. Hareven, "Family Transitions into Old Age", in Transitions: The Family and Life Course in Historical Perspective, ed. Hareven (New York: Academic Press, 1978), p. 219.

²² TPW, 15 May 1856, p. 2 cols. 5-6; SSDM, 1882.

²³ Predictably, the oldest residents had the lowest persistence/survival rate due to mortality.

contrast with the low rates of persistence for urban Hamilton, Ontario are not surprising: before the correction for mortality, only 24% of Hamilton men aged 15 to 24 in 1861 and 33% of men aged 25 to 34 were linked to the 1871 census. However, even in the more comparable parish of Moncton, New Brunswick, persistence/survival rates are lower than those of St. Stephen Methodists: between 40% and 49% for young adult men in Moncton, and for both men and women in Moncton, 60% of the married, 45% of the single, and 25% of the widowed.²⁴ It is possible that the St. Stephen rates are simply due to the methodology: close study of the families of a single religious community, with special attention to women. Was the parish itself more 'stable' in terms of geographic mobility, or was Methodism's founding role in the parish manifest in the deeper roots and lesser transience of the Methodist community?

The answers to these questions reflect the contrast between the expansion of the 1850s and the much slower growth of the 1860s. In 1861, only 44% of the 844 household heads within the two circuits in 1861 could be linked to the parish in 1851, an only slightly higher proportion than the 39% found by David Gagan for Peel County households in 1861.²⁵ For the next decade, persistence patterns among St.

²⁴ Katz et al., p. 109; Sheva Medjuck, "Wooden Ships and Iron People: The Lives of the People of Moncton, New Brunswick, 1851 to 1871", (Ph.D. Thesis, York University,

Stephen household heads were more similar to those in Moncton: 60% of the 1861 household heads were listed in the 1871 census, compared with 57% in Moncton. Not surprisingly, in St. Stephen in 1871, 59% of the 1,128 could be linked back to 1861. However, the contrast between the villages and settlements of St. Stephen and a city the size of Hamilton is less dramatic for younger household heads. In 1871, only 23% of the 44 household heads in St. Stephen under the age of 25 were linked to the 1861 census, and only 35% of the 242 aged 25 to 34 were so linked. Hamilton had, in fact, a larger proportion of household heads under 25 who had persisted since 1861, and, at 29%, an only slightly lower proportion of persisting heads aged 25 to 34.²⁶

However, among St. Stephen household heads, Methodists and those who headed families containing one or more Methodists were more likely to be longer residents in the parish. Of the 1,510 men and women who were household heads in either 1861 or 1871, 550 or 36% headed Methodist families, 611 or 40% headed never-Methodist Protestant families, and 349 or 23% headed never-Methodist Catholic

1978), pp. 160-61.

²⁵ David Gagan, Hopeful Travellers: Families, Land and Social Change in Mid-Victorian Peel County, Canada West (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 115.

²⁶ Medjuck, p. 162; Katz et al., p. 122.

families.²⁷ This last distinction recognizes the later arrival of most Catholic families in the parish. Although the age distributions of these three groups were not markedly different, roughly one third of the heads in the Methodist group had remained in the parish between 1851 and 1871, compared with one fourth of the remaining Protestant heads, and only 15% of the Catholic heads. Almost equal proportions (7-9%) of each group had been in the parish in 1851 and 1861, but did not persist or survive to 1871. The proportions of newcomers after 1851 in each group varied more: 24% of the Methodists, 20% of the other Protestants, and 28% of the Catholics remained in the parish from 1861 to 1871, and only 31% of the Methodists, compared with 49% of the other Protestants, and 50% of the Catholics appeared in only one census.

Given the early founding of Methodist churches in Charlotte County, it is not surprising that heads of Methodist families were the single largest denominational group among household heads who had come to St. Stephen from other parts of the county since 1851: 35% of the 156 such household heads in either 1861 and 1871. Just over half of the 152 household heads born in the United States headed partly or wholly Methodist families, again reflecting the early establishment of a Methodist tradition along both

²⁷ The partly Methodist families included a few Catholics.

sides of the St. Croix and among early American settlers. However, local Methodism was not wholly North American by the 1860s. Of the 1,414 Methodists in either census over the age of 14 in 1861 or 24 in 1871, 12% were British immigrants.²⁸ As Chapter Six will show in more detail, Methodism had benefited from the weakness of its rivals and gathered in many immigrants from other traditions. Among immigrant household heads residing within the two circuits, Methodists or those heading Methodist families made up one third of the 37 Scottish household heads, over one half of the 62 English, and 13% of the 431 Irish (30% of the 183 Irish Protestant household heads).

Whether North American migrants or British immigrants, most new arrivals in the parish settled in the expanding villages, particularly St. Stephen. As with Moncton, the overall lower transience rates of the parish reflected its social diversity and inclusion of both rural settlements and emerging towns, allowing movement back and forth between different kinds of occupations.²⁹ Distinguishing the Methodist constituencies of these places and their re-numbering by transience returns to the analytical model for church growth with which this chapter began. Since

²⁸ Where census returns differed in birthplace, the British birthplace was used, since in this study self-perception was more important than immigration patterns.

²⁹ Medjuck, p. 155.

'proximity' is an obvious and important factor in religious involvement, the study of church growth must identify the geographic constituency of a particular congregation or class meeting.

Although only 23% of the 844 parish households within the two circuits were rural, 39% of the 313 Methodist families in 1861 and 43% of the 1,740 Methodists or their relations lived outside the villages. Thus, most rural families were partly or wholly Methodist. As the following table indicates, 63% of families along the Valley, Old Ridge, or Back Roads (henceforth Old Ridge for brevity); 67% of those along the Getchell Ridge Road or in Barter Settlement, and 56% of those in Mohannas were Methodist. The Methodist constituency in the Old Ridge group--the largest of these place groups--and, to a lesser extent, the constituency in the smallest--Mohannas--were the least renumbered by transience in 1861 or 1871. Even though all three places had been settled early in the century, roughly one third of the Old Ridge Methodist families were newcomers with only one or no link to the parish in 1851, and half of those in the smaller Getchell/Barter and Mohannas groups were also newcomers. With the arrival of additional family members from other Charlotte county parishes or single Methodist boarders or employees, the proportions of newcomers since

1851 among individuals over the age of 14 in 1861 was higher in Old Ridge--at 30%, and roughly 40% of the Getchell/Barter or Mohannas groups. However, only a few Methodist families in the Old Ridge or Mohannas groups entirely left between 1861 and 1871,³⁰ and in the latter year, only one fourth of the by then 78 households in Old Ridge and one fifth of the 18 in Mohannas were entirely or virtually new families since 1861 (the latter having only one relation linked to the previous census year).

More recently settled and perhaps more dependent on the lumber trade, the Getchell Ridge Road and Barter Settlement group changed the most between 1861 and 1871. As Table 1 shows, one fourth of the Getchell/Barter 1861 families had entirely left the parish by 1871, and another 10% left only one resident; of all 1,740 individual Methodists or their relations within the two circuits, the Getchell/Barter group had the lowest proportion of surviving or persisting residents between 1861 and 1871. In the latter year, the Getchell/Barter group had higher proportions of new Methodist families than the other two rural areas, and higher proportions of new individuals over the age of 14.

³⁰ The numbers of those linked from one census year to another include those who moved from one part of the parish to another, most commonly to the villages.

Table 1: Methodists and Households - 1861

	Methodists and relations		TYPES OF HOUSEHOLDS				Total Hholds			
	N	%pl.	%Mth	N	%pl.	N	%pl.	N		
VR/ORR/BR	435	63%	23%	71	30%	34	7%	7	13%	112
St. St.	376	28%	23%	73	54%	143	18%	47	31%	263
Union M.	161	38%	10%	31	36%	29	26%	21	10%	81
GRR/BS	197	67%	10%	32	31%	15	2%	1	6%	48
Milltown	263	22%	16%	48	37%	81	41%	91	26%	220
Upper M.	184	45%	12%	38	33%	28	21%	18	10%	84
Mohannas	124	56%	6%	20	11%	4	33%	12	4%	36
Total	1,740			313		334		197		844

METHODISTS & RELATIONS	ALL AGES				OVER 14 IN 1861				
	Fnd %pl.	c71 N	Not %pl.	fnd N	Fnd %	c51 N	Not %	fnd N	Total N
VR/ORR/BR	73%	316	27%	119	70%	176	30%	76	252
St. St.	60%	227	40%	149	45%	116	55%	141	257
Union M.	66%	107	34%	54	54%	48	46%	41	89
GRR/BS	55%	108	45%	89	59%	69	41%	47	116
Milltown	58%	153	42%	110	49%	84	51%	86	170
Upper M.	63%	116	37%	68	41%	43	59%	61	104
Mohannas	67%	83	33%	41	58%	43	42%	29	72
Total		1,110		630		579		481	1,060

METH. FAMILIES	IN C51		NOT FND/1LNK		IN C71		NOT FND/1LNK	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
VR/ORR/BR	68%	48	32%	23	82%	58	18%	13
St. St.	40%	29	60%	44	68%	50	32%	23
Union M.	45%	14	55%	17	81%	25	19%	6
GRR/BS	50%	16	50%	16	66%	21	34%	11
Milltown	46%	22	54%	26	65%	31	35%	17
Upper M.	34%	13	66%	25	79%	30	21%	8
Mohannas	55%	11	45%	9	90%	18	10%	2
Total		153		160		233		80

Most of the parish's newer Methodists had come to the villages, where roughly half of both Methodist families and individuals over the age of 14 in 1861 were newcomers to the churches or class meetings in their vicinity. The preceding table shows that only one fifth of the Methodist families in Union or Upper Mills left between 1861 and 1871, compared with roughly one third of those in St. Stephen and Milltown.³¹ By 1871, at least one third of the Methodist families in the three largest of the four villages were newcomers, and 29% of those in Union Mills. The latter figure in Union Mills is less meaningful than its parallel in 1861, because its expansion and its neighbours' encroachment eliminated its visible distinction as a separate place.³² Of Methodists over the age of 14 in 1871, almost half of those in St. Stephen--the most prosperous of all the villages, were new to the parish since 1861, compared with 40% of those in Upper Mills, and 36% of those in Milltown. With this last spurt of growth and the changing local economy, these three villages each

³¹ Other records and family names suggest that in both 1861 and 1871, part of the 'statistical' transience in the latter place was due to people moving back and forth across the river.

³² Map of the City of Calais, Washington County, Maine and Towns of St. Stephen and Milltown, Charlotte County, N. B., (Roe and Colby, 1874).

incorporated in the early 1870s, the two largest into towns.³³

These patterns of persistence and transience among Methodists in St. Stephen correspond to the financial and, as Chapter Five will show, the numeric growth or decline of local congregations and Societies. The relative stability of Old Ridge and Mohannas matched the financial improvement of the former's congregation and the maintenance of the Society in the latter, with neither expanding or contracting at the same rate as churches in the villages. The steady growth of St. Stephen and Upper Mills would be matched by revivalism and the physical expansion of both church buildings and memberships. The greater out-migration from Milltown and Getchell/Barter settlements in the 1860s probably hastened the decline of these parts of the circuit in the 1870s. Yet although Methodists or Methodist families in St. Stephen included significant numbers of older or longer residents in St. Stephen, the transience of the 1850s and 1860s necessarily added new faces to the pool of potential members or hearers. Of all 1,414 Methodists or their co-resident relations in either the 1861 or 1871 census who were over the age of 14 in 1861,³⁴ only one third

³³ Davis, p. 249.

³⁴ This group also includes those over the age of 24 in 1871, since it includes those who appeared on only one census as well as linked Methodists, whose ages were not

had remained in the parish between 1851 and 1871. Another third appeared in two of these three census returns, and the remainder in only one return. Despite ministerial laments over the transience that moved hearers and members away from churches, the geographic mobility that brought newcomers in was a balancing force. Moreover, class or prayer meetings could only remain interesting through the revitalizing influence of new participants³⁵ with their own life histories, present circumstances, and spiritual journeys. As the next chapter will show, geographic mobility combined with the revival cycle to produce a continually re-named and re-numbered membership.

always ten years apart.

³⁵ Dean, pp. 44-45.

Chapter V

The Dynamics of Church Growth (2): Revivalism

Saintly in name and picturesque in setting, the southwest corner of Charlotte County was home to an "enterprising people". Yet after the minister on the St. Stephen circuit in 1860 thus described his new station, he moved from a traveller's to an evangelical perspective: there were indeed "signs of life in this valley of dry bones".¹ In the 1860s and 1870s, "revival" was still the central image in any clerical discussion of Methodist church growth. As one writer warned, although "crowds of eager listeners and apparently devout worshippers" were "pleasing":

The church which is not continually receiving fresh contributions of energy and life in converts saved by its instrumentality will inevitably experience a decline in spirituality and vital godliness.²

The membership's constant "replenishment" was doubly necessary because of its constant depletion, from both death or transience and the expected 'declension'³ among new

¹ TPW, 26 December 1860, p. 2 col. 4.

² TPW, 22 January 1873, p. 2 cols. 1-3; 29 January 1873, p. 2 cols. 2-3; 11 January 1879, p. 4 cols. 2-3; 15 October 1880, p. 4 cols. 2-3.

members. But although clergy stressed that Methodism "should be a continued revival" of individuals in weekly prayer or class meetings, its "congregations" reportedly thought that new conversions in any number could only take place in or as a result of special revival services.⁴

Community studies of revivalism have focused on the Awakenings, particularly on New England towns where revivalism represented the social disruption or transformation of Calvinist or post-Calvinist churches. As part three of this thesis will show, the demographic questions raised by these studies are very relevant to later Methodist revivalism. This chapter will also draw on their findings concerning transience within churches.⁵ Although the coincidence of the greater number of Methodist revivals in the same decades as St. Stephen's economic transformation may well parallel the experience of churches profiled in these studies, this subject would require another thesis to explore. Moreover, the ecclesiastical role of mid to late

³ This word is convenient though judgemental, since undoubtedly many ex-members were still faithfully involved in the church in other ways and experienced no spiritual decline by their own lights.

⁴ TPW, 10 November 1869, p. 2 cols. 5-6; 31 January 1872, p. 2 cols. 1-2.

⁵ Particularly Paul E. Johnson, A Shopkeeper's Millenium: Society and Revivalism in Rochester (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978) and Mary P. Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1856 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

nineteenth century Methodist revivalism and thus its origins were quite different. As elaborated in Chapter Two (p. 76), by the 1860s the differences between a weekday Methodist prayer meeting and a revival service were simply those of size--length and numbers--not style.

Using aggregate figures, historians of British Methodism suggest a more longitudinal approach to revivalism and church growth. Although the external and social context of church growth or a particular revival might affect its extent, its primary sources and "mechanism" were internal and local, situated within wider evangelical expectations and local church circumstances.⁶ This chapter combines this latter approach with the methodology of community studies to examine revivalism in St. Stephen and the dynamics of Methodist growth during the 1860s and 1870s. A portrait of the circuits' ministers and their revival efforts, with brief and speculative forays into questions of social context, will detail the geography and incidence of revivalism within the parish during these decades. Dissecting aggregate church growth into its components will reveal the high membership turnover of local churches, from

⁶ Carwardine, p. 56; Hempton, p. 16; Luker, p. 316; Christopher B. Turner, "Revivalism and Welsh Society in the Nineteenth Century", in Disciplines of Faith: Studies in Religion, Politics, and Patriarchy, ed. Jim Obelkevich, Lyndal Roper, Ralph Samuel (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), p. 316.

both transience and 'declension'. Lastly, analyzing church membership and attendance in relation to the Methodist adherence of circuits as a whole and the places within them will estimate the rates of these forms of church involvement.

Hezekiah McKeown, whose implicit spiritual indictment of the parish began this chapter, and his Milltown colleague William Smith began their three year terms in the summer of 1859. Their years in the parish coincided with the boundary between two eras of trans-Atlantic revivalism: that of the Awakenings, involving primarily denominational leaders and dramatic church growth, and that of late nineteenth century professional leaders, in an age of slower growth and a different style of revivalism. Triggered by economic depression and encouraged as an evangelical response to political strife and religious sectionalism, the American revivals of 1857/58 were most prominent in the urban northeast. British evangelical leaders followed with increased revival efforts, and while American revivalism waned over the next two years, British revivalism peaked, most notably in Wales and Ulster. Although the theological and psychological styles of these revivals were in many ways closer to the Awakenings than to later revivalism, one feature clearly marked them as 'modern'. The new

communications technology of the telegraph had speedily turned the first New York City revival into international news, and set the precedent for the spread of "revival intelligence".⁷

As contemporaries observed, revivals spread not necessarily because of similar social contexts or as contagious social behaviour among converts, but because clerical and lay leaders--more 'informed' than ever before, were inspired by the example and success of others to engage in revival work. Commenting in 1859 on the "hopeful signs" of the past two years as possible harbingers of a "great revival", the editor of the Wesleyan urged his readers to therefore consider the "spiritual necessities" of their own "neighborhoods".⁸ A reading of the annual Pastoral Addresses or the Minutes of Conferences and districts reveals that many clergy perceived previous or expected church growth in comparison with other branches of trans-Atlantic Methodism. There were even personal networks of 'revival intelligence': in March 1877, the Courier noted that McKeown had stopped in St. Stephen en route to the Moody and Sanky revivals in

⁷ Kent, pp. 34, 71-72; Sandra Sizer, "Politics and Apolitical Religion: The Great Urban Revivals of the Late Nineteenth Century", Church History (1979), p. 82; Carwardine, pp. 162-74; William G. McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham (New York: Ronald Press, 1959), p. 163.

⁸ TPW, 2 September 1863, p. 1 col. 1; 24 March 1859, p. 2 cols. 1-2.

Boston, which the Wesleyan was covering.⁹ One can only speculate as to how much local laity shared in this knowledge and attitude through their ministers' reports or their reading of the Wesleyan. Certainly, most of the roughly 90 families who took the paper were occasional rather than regular subscribers. However, class leaders took it faithfully during the years of their leadership, and some noted prayer meeting leaders appear to have subscribed throughout their residence in the parish during these decades.¹⁰

The relation of trans-Atlantic revivalism in the late 1850s to the spiritual state of St. Stephen (in Methodist terms) demonstrates the primary role of local circumstances in effecting a revival. In Maritime Methodism, the conference year 1857/58 had surpassed "all previous ones in the history of these colonies in the number, extent and power of revivals". Although the economic depression was also felt along the St. Croix, one observer describing a "gloomy picture of the poor farms and deserted houses

⁹ SCC, 22 March 1871, p. 2 col. 3; TPW, 31 March 1877, p. 2 cols. 1-2. There was a weekly steamboat from St. Stephen to Boston, but unfortunately it is not clear whether McKeown also came back through the parish.

¹⁰ As indicated in Chapter One (p. 30), the information regarding subscriptions underestimates their number and duration, since in some years only monies per circuit were reported. Thirty families subscribed for five or more years, of whom ten were the families of class or prayer meeting leaders.

between St. Stephen and Oak Bay",¹¹ different ministerial styles and lay response brought different results to the two circuits. McKeown's predecessor retired in 1861, but although ill health may have hindered him from organizing special services in his own circuit, J.B. Brownell assisted at a Milltown revival in 1858. His colleague's rhetorical flight, that "People flock to the House of God as doves to their windows", was born out by the circuit's higher church attendance in that and the following year. However, the Milltown minister's report in the Wesleyan also shows that a local revival was a relative term that might refer to modest gains in church members: "Nineteen new born souls, several backsliders reclaimed, and a number of penitents seeking redemption in the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of all their sins". When William Smith arrived in 1859, over half of the circuit's members (excluding St. James) had joined in the previous two years.¹² Just a few months before McKeown's arrival, Oak Bay, in the neighbouring parish of St. David, had enjoyed a "powerful and glorious revival" for seven weeks. Both Brownell and a number of lay Methodists had attended services, "caught the flame" and "a blessed work...commenced among them". But according to McKeown, the

¹¹ Reports of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, 1858 (henceforth RWMMS), p. 129; Davis, pp. 183-84.

¹² Betts, p. 130; TPW, 20 May 1858, p. 2 col. 4; SJDM, 1857-59; MTMR, 1858-60.

report proved premature; only "a few drops" of revival showers had fallen. The St. Stephen membership records of 1860 confirm this, for only five members in that year had joined in 1858 or 1859.¹³

McKeown was roughly thirty years old when he came to St. Stephen, and had been ordained only two years. A Nova Scotian educated at Wesleyan University in the United States, he became known as an energetic and successful revivalist. Only six new members joined during his first year, but in November 1860, McKeown held meetings every night at Old Ridge for three weeks:

Nothing like it was ever witnessed in that place-old and young alike were prostrate before the Lord...over 40 professed to be blessed with the pardon of sin, and were enabled to rejoice in God their Saviour.

Unless some St. Stephen church members were among these converts, not all joined the local class meeting: with only 10 members in 1860, the Old Ridge class meeting gained 34 new members by 1861. McKeown announced that special revival services in the village of St. Stephen would follow those at Old Ridge, but they were never described in the Wesleyan. Twenty new members would join in St. Stephen by the summer of 1861, 19 forming a new class meeting.¹⁴

¹³ TPW, 3 March 1859, p. 2 col. 2; 26 December 1860, p. 2 col. 4; SSMR, 1858-60.

¹⁴ George H. Cornish, Cyclopedia of Methodism in Canada, Containing Historical, Educational, and Statistical

The Milltown circuit was William Smith's penultimate charge as a Methodist minister: he had come to the Maritime Provinces from England in 1825 and would die in 1863. He did not report on his stay in St. Stephen to the Wesleyan, and only from his daughter's obituary do we know about the "protracted meeting" at Milltown in the spring of 1861. The records suggest, however, that only 13 people joined the church between 1860 and 1861, two in Barter Settlement and the rest in the villages.¹⁵ This and with McKeown's dismissal of the previous revival in St. Stephen illustrate the difficulties in interpreting revival reports and the distinction between efforts and results.

McKeown was succeeded in 1862 by Robert A. Temple, a New Brunswicker who had joined the ministry in 1849. Like McKeown, he would also be remembered for his association with successful revivals.¹⁶ By the end of his first year, the Old Ridge class meeting had gained four new members, and three men who would become permanent members of the Official Board had joined in St. Stephen itself.¹⁷ In November 1863,

Information (Toronto: Methodist Book and Publishing House; Halifax: Methodist Book Room, 1881), pp. 392, 777-79; NBPEI, 1883; TPW, 26 December 1860, p. 2 col. 4; SSMR, 1860-61.

¹⁵ Cornish, p. 397; TPW, 25 March 1863, p. 2 col. 1; 10 September 1862, p. 2 col. 1; MTMR, 1860-61.

¹⁶ NSC, 1908; Cornish, p. 399.

¹⁷ SSMR, 1863; Because of gaps in the records, it is

Temple visited house to house for four weeks in Oak Hill, just north of the parish of St. Stephen on the road from Old Ridge. He held services twice a day, and "68 professed to have found peace by believing in Lord Jesus". The success of the revival in St. James led ultimately to its separation as a new circuit in 1869, reducing the responsibilities of the St. Stephen and Milltown ministers. During the first week of January 1864, Temple held two daily meetings in St. Stephen itself,¹⁸ which, according to Temple, had not experienced as extensive a revival "for years".

The Holy Spirit came down with great power to the hearts of the people, believers were much blessed, and their faith greatly strengthened....Many unbelievers were convinced of sin, and led to the importance of at once seeking the pearl of great price, and about 50 wished to have their names enrolled with God's people.

By the end of 1864, ten new members had joined the Old Ridge and Curtis Settlement class meetings, and another 44 in the villages.¹⁹

Smith was succeeded by another minister on the verge of retirement. Thomas Angwin had begun his career as a local preacher in Cornwall and served in Newfoundland since the 1830s.²⁰ There were no reported revivals during 1862 or

impossible to tell whether these members first joined in McKeown's last year, or Temple's first.

¹⁸ By their timing, these were part of the union week of prayer, whose origins and nature will be discussed in Chapter Six.

1863, but 12 new members had joined by the end of Angwin's ministry, all but one in the villages.²¹ Angwin was followed by another veteran English immigrant, William Wilson. Wilson's biographer singled out both his sermons and debates about doctrinal and ecclesiastical issues, and his broader knowledge of theology, astronomy, music, and languages. A "Londoner", his ministerial style may have been more urbane, for despite his fidelity to "pure Methodism", he was remembered not as a revivalist but for his skill in "sowing" the seeds of "Christian growth".²² Although Wilson reported "increasing" congregations, the records show only 13 new members by the end of his three year term.²³

During the rest of the decade, the St. Stephen circuit remained immune from three major revivals along the St. Croix: an ecumenical Calais revival in 1866; a Methodist revival in St. Andrews in 1867; and the major Milltown revival that would occur in the spring of 1868. Only five

¹⁹ TPW, 23 March 1864, p. 2 cols. 5-6; SSMR, 1864.

²⁰ NSC, 1890.

²¹ MTMR, 1863; as with St. Stephen, the gap in the records makes it impossible to tell whether the ten listed by 1863 had joined in Smith's final year or Angwin's first.

²² Cornish, p. 421; George O. Huestis, Memorials of Wesleyan Missionaries and Ministers Who have Died Within the Bounds of the Conference of Eastern British America (Halifax: William McNab, 1872), pp. 129-32.

²³ TPW, 28 February 1866, p. 2 col. 5; MTMR, 1864-66.

new members joined in St. Stephen during the one year term of T. Berton Smith, who left the circuit to join the Methodist Episcopal Church. Yet Smith did not lack fervour, since only a few months after his departure from St. Stephen, he was reported as "truly eloquent" in a western Massachusetts camp meeting.²⁴ Between 1865 and 1867, the two circuits combined gained only 27 members; these years were the nadir of membership growth between 1860 and 1877 (when the number of new members would plummet again).

Although to the Wesleyan's surprise, other parts of the region experienced revivals during the Confederation debates and first federal election, the St. Stephen and Milltown circuits clearly did not. In common with other evangelical views of the time, the Wesleyan editor wrote that: "There is no influence more inimical to religious progress, whether in the individual Christian or in the collective church than political strife."²⁵ Certainly, from the victory of the anti-Confederation candidates in March 1865 through the Fenian scare of the following spring and the return of pro-Confederation candidates, St. Stephen Methodists had good reason to be distracted from religious concerns.

²⁴ SCC, 17 February 1866, p. 2 col. 2; 29 November 1867, p. 2 col. 7; TPW, 31 July 1867, p. 2 cols. 3-4; 1 September 1866, p. 2 col. 2.

²⁵ TPW, 18 March 1868, p. 2 cols. 1-3; EBAC, 1860-61; Carwardine, p. 55.

Steward and trustee Zechariah Chipman was Tilley's father-in-law and may well have represented the pro-Confederationists within local Methodism. Two of the anti-Confederation candidates probably had loose ties to local congregations: George F. Hill was one of the few remaining grandsons of founding Methodists Abner and Stephen Hill who had not left the denomination by 1861; the unsuccessful Joseph Donald was an Anglican resident of the Ledge, but his wife would become a Methodist adherent by 1871.²⁶

But without information about individuals and their background or behaviour, historical speculation about revivalism and political (or economic) context comes perilously close to a form of ecological fallacy, by implying that individual responses to a revival can be predicted from the temporal or geographical coincidence of a social context and the occurrence of a revival. Moreover, any examination of church growth over the long run shows how erratic the relationship between political and religious enthusiasm or activity.²⁷ Although the conference had

²⁶ See D.G. Bell, "The Confederation Issue in Charlotte County, N.B." (M.A. thesis, Queen's University, 1976) for the political life of the parish during these years.

²⁷ Carwardine, pp. 54-55; R. B. Walker, "The growth of Wesleyan Methodism in Victorian England and Wales", Journal of Ecclesiastical History, (1973) pp. 268-70 summarizes the extensive debate over this issue in British Methodism.

expressed a mixture of ethical, spiritual, and financial concern over the Civil War, neither its onset nor the province's own election campaign appear to have hindered the 1861 revivals in St. Stephen. The War's effect on churches in such a border community must have been equivocal, on the one hand perhaps increasing religious sensibilities in light of abolitionism and the new scale of warfare, on the other hand deflecting or subverting them with local tensions arising from the war.²⁸ No other political questions loomed large enough to provoke clerical comment on their effect on Methodist growth.²⁹ Moreover, the provincial schools question and the temperance movement, though contentious in the parish as a whole, were easy allies with religious enthusiasm.

The end of the 1860s brought an exceptional revival in Milltown, reputedly the largest in the circuit's history. Howard Sprague had received a B.A. from Mount Allison in 1863, and gained an M.A. by course while travelling on trial. Ordained in 1866 at the age of 23, he began a three year ministry in Milltown in 1867. Sprague's obituary stressed his reputation as one "of the great preachers of

²⁸ EBAC, 1861; Davis, pp. 191-92; W. S. MacNutt, New Brunswick: A History 1784-1867 (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1963), p. 400.

²⁹ With the exception of the January 1874 federal election, provincial and federal elections in the 1870s occurred in revival years but well after winter, the revival season.

Canada", but did not eulogize him as a revivalist, perhaps because of his eventual move from the itinerancy to Mount Allison. In November 1867, an Upper Mills resident wrote in the Courier that Sprague's "eloquence" filled "their place of worship to overflowing long before the appointed time." The peak of the revival occurred between April and May 1868 in Milltown itself, culminating in a service in which 11 adults were baptized, between 60 and 70 joined the membership, and "the Lord's Supper was administered to a larger number of communicants than the church has had for 12 years." In February 1869, another "16 candidates for church membership presented themselves for baptism" at a Sunday morning service.³⁰ According to the Courier, the congregation in the Milltown Methodist church had doubled in size between 1868 and 1870. By Sprague's first surviving records in 1869, the circuit had received 95 new members, with another five joining in the following year. Yet even though some rural families in settlements with preaching services also held pews in Milltown, the revival appears to have been entirely confined to the villages. Only a few miles away, the rural class meetings gained no new members during these years.³¹

³⁰ Cornish, pp. 398, 780; NBPEIC, 1917; SCC, 8 November 1867, p. 2 col. 4; 1 May 1868, p. 2 col. 6; 15 May 1868, p. 2 col. 5; 25 February 1869, p. 2 col. 5.

³¹ SCC, 5 January 1870, p. 1 cols. 4-5; Pew Records,

Berton Smith's successor in St. Stephen was Alexander B. Black, a Nova Scotian who had begun his career as a farmer and local preacher. Despite his controversial career described in Chapter Three (p. 120), the circuit gained another 17 members between 1866 and 1869, all but one in the villages. Clearly as a strong remedy, McKeown returned to St. Stephen, accompanied by a recent Mount Allison graduate, Richard Watson Weddall, who worked on trial as a local preacher. Observing that the circuit was "in a very low spiritual state", McKeown blamed both the unspecified "trial" and the temporary disruption of the congregation because of the construction of a new church. During March and April of 1870, he held special services "of much religious interest" every night for several weeks in St. Stephen, adding "between 20 and 30 persons" to the membership. The 1870 returns show that 36 new members joined the St. Stephen church and one new member joined the Curtis Settlement class meeting. With the Quarterly Official Board's recommendation in his favour, Weddall left the circuit for ordained ministry elsewhere, and McKeown remained for two more years.³² He held "protracted evening prayer meetings" in February 1871, and in the following

Milltown circuit; MTMR, 1869-70.

³² TPW, 5 January 1870, p. 2 cols. 4-5; SCC, 17 March 1870, p. 2 col. 2; 17 April 1870, p. 2 col. 2; SSQOB, 1870; Betts, p. 161.

November the Courier reported that "the people" in Old Ridge had shown "considerable religious interest" arising from ongoing Methodist "Special Services". In March 1872, McKeown held services every evening in the St. Stephen church "with a good degree of success". The membership returns are incomplete for 1871, but aggregate totals and known losses suggest that several more than the 20 new members listed by 1872 must have joined in late 1870 or early 1871 but left by the following year.³³

Richard Smith, Sprague's successor in Milltown, was born in Nova Scotia in 1819. His obituary described him as "mighty in prayer", a man of "boundless energy...commanding presence, splendid voice and original style, who delighted in evangelistic work". Given this personality, he probably assisted in the extensive 1871 revival on the American side of the St. Croix. The Courier published reports of a Baring revival in March 1871 and of an outdoor Methodist revival in Milltown, Calais in October, which the Methodist minister from St. Andrews had also attended. According to the Wesleyan, the Calais Church had experienced continuous revival during the year, through nightly "grove" meetings, and was now the strongest Methodist church in Eastern Maine.³⁴ As in St. Stephen, aggregate figures and known

³³ TPW, 16 February 1871, p. 2 col. 4; SCC, 23 November 1871, p. 2 col. 6; 28 March 1872, p. 2 col. 3; SSMR, 1870-72.

losses suggest that more new members joined in 1871 or 1872 than can be deduced by the fragmentary records for these years. At least 20 joined in 1871, and Smith's revival work in March 1872 at Upper Mills brought in 10 new members to the village class and 20 in Mohannas. After revival services held in March 1873 at Milltown itself, 31 new members joined, including 15 from Getchell and Barter Settlements.³⁵

Nineteen new members joined the St. Stephen circuit during the first year of John A. Clarke's itinerancy, but the next major revival in the parish occurred the following year, during his final months on the circuit. Clark held degrees from Mount Allison and Genesee College (New York), and was eulogized for his administrative and pastoral skills, particularly his ministry "of comfort" and "consolation" to individuals. Yet he was clearly also adept at revival work. Assisted by a young minister on trial, Clarke led services throughout the spring of 1874, despite poor health. The first reports of conversions and baptisms reached the Wesleyan at the beginning of March; by the end of April, over ninety had "been forward for prayer". Three new classes were organized, and 68 new members had joined by

³⁴ NSC, 1911; TPW, 16 March 1871, p. 2 col. 2; 5 October 1871, p. 2 col. 4; 31 January 1872, p. 2 col. 5.

³⁵ SCC, 28 March 1872, p. 2 col. 3; 13 March 1873, p. 1 col. 5; MTMR, 1871-73.

the returns of that year, sixty joining in a single service.³⁶

It seems probable that Milltown Methodists also attended the revival services. Recalling the excellence of past ministers on the two circuits, Smith's successor in Milltown claimed that "to none of them was given the joy of witnessing so extensive a work of grace as God is now granting". In March and April 1874, six individuals had joined the Upper Mills Church and subsequently 12 in Milltown; by the June returns of that year, 24 had joined the Milltown circuit class meetings. A New Brunswicker who had been in the ministry since 1846, James Taylor was a fluent preacher, an "extensive reader", and "a forceful debater on theological issues" such as baptism. Yet he resisted explaining or theologizing on the 1874 revival, urging his readers "not to question; but to praise".³⁷

A less pious historian is tempted to situate this revival within trans-Atlantic evangelicalism. In December 1873, the Wesleyan had reported on the Moody and Sanky revivals in England, noting the "impressions of many" that Eastern British America was due for a similar revival. According to

³⁶ NBPEI, 1907; TPW, 2 March 1874, p. 3 col. 1; 6 April 1874, p. 3 col. 1; 13 April 1874, p. 3 col. 1; 27 April 1874, p. 2 col. 7; SCC, 25 June 1874, p. 2 col. 3.

³⁷ TPW, 20 April 1874, p. 2 cols. 4-5; NSC, 1903; SSMR, MTMR, 1873-74.

the Courier, the Baptist church in St. Stephen had also experienced a revival during these same months. Moreover, 1874 was also the peak of membership growth in both circuits over the two decades. Thus, linking the revival to the beginning of the economic depression seems logical at first glance. Observing that 1874 was a year of both "great commercial disaster", arising from the panic of the previous fall, and of "solemn reproof", the Wesleyan in March had summarized the religious response as: "'Our idols are smitten and we will turn to the true God.'" However, it also acknowledged that this sequence did not always occur: "Gracious awakenings come alike to the prosperous and the poor".³⁸

Comparison of revival reports and membership figures justifies this caution, for not all circuits in the Maritime Conference experienced revivals in 1874, nor did all gain significant numbers of new members. Although Clarke may have planned extra services because of general revival expectations arising from the Moody and Sanky revivals or the broader economic climate, the local effects of the depression did not appear until well after Clarke left. By April, the mills were in full force, and the lumber market was expected to improve from that of 1873. Some local

³⁸ TPW, 23 December 1873, p. 2 col. 2; SCC, 9 April 1874, p. 2 col. 3; TPW, 2 March 1874, p. 2 cols. 1-2.

Methodists may have sustained Clarke's revival in response to news of American depression, but such news was less prominent in the Courier during the first half of the year than in the second.³⁹ As is the case with enthusiasm and political activity, contemporary and historical commentators on revivalism have found occasional links, but no clear or consistent association between economic and revival cycles.⁴⁰ In fact, some clergy expected membership and congregational losses during hard times, because of the financial expectations placed on voluntarist churches.⁴¹

For both circuits, 1875 marked the beginning of greater out-migration and of greater financial strains. The 1875 spiritual report for the new District of St. Stephen noted "many difficulties" in Milltown, despite the "prosperous state" of Upper Mills. Nevertheless, 17 new members joined during Taylor's final year in Milltown.⁴² The new minister in St. Stephen was another New Brunswicker: although "retiring in his manner", John Prince was a noted preacher

³⁹ NBPEI and NSC, 1874-75; SCC, 3 March 1874, p. 2 col. 6; TPW, 20 April 1874, p. 2 col. 4; Davis, p. 250.

⁴⁰ Again, see the summaries in Carwardine and Walker.

⁴¹ EBAC, 1860-62; TPW, 18 March 1876, p. 92 col. 4; SJDM, 1867.

⁴² SSDM, 1875. Prior to 1875, the St. Stephen circuit was part of the Saint John District and the latter's minutes referred only to summaries of all circuits' spiritual reports.

and one of the founders, in 1872, of the annual Methodist camp meeting in Berwick, Nova Scotia. In his first year (1874/75), the St. Stephen congregations had been "unusually large" and the class and prayer meetings "well attended", though only three new members joined. In the second, the burning of the relatively new church "caused a partial scattering of the congregation and interfered much with the well-being of the Circuit." Prince spent considerable time fundraising outside the circuit, while another minister replaced him locally, and only seven new members joined in 1876 and 1877.⁴³

Financial concerns did not wholly overwhelm the spiritual in the Milltown circuit. In his first year, Taylor's successor W. W. Percival⁴⁴ led a small revival which had brought "signal blessings" and 20 new members. In the second, Percival had held "special services with some conversions". Lacking the influx of new members to offset out-migration, the class at Union Mills became so small that by the mid 1870s its remaining members joined meetings in Milltown itself. During this decade, the rural class meetings met less frequently and were more often without lay

⁴³ NBPEI, 1901; Fleming, pp. 17-18; SSDM, 1875-76; TPW, 18 January 1876, p. 13 cols. 3-4; 22 July 1876, p. 237 col. 5.

⁴⁴ An Orangeman, Percival eventually became a Presbyterian, and thus was never eulogized by the Methodists (Betts, p. 151).

leadership. The meetings at Getchell and Barter Settlements became small enough to combine, and their leaders retired, though remaining as stewards. In 1877, the Mohannes class apparently did not meet at all, although the nominal leader may have continued to function as a steward; by 1881, it was led by the minister whenever he preached in the settlement.⁴⁵

Prince's successor in St. Stephen, Edwin Evans, was a former local preacher from Yorkshire who had emigrated to the Maritime Provinces shortly after his ordination in 1860. The Wesleyan described him as one of the "most thoughtful and effective preachers" of the time, but "without pretension or display". Evans was apparently an avid but critical reader: in a lecture entitled "Books, Brains and Blunders" given in St. Stephen, he derided contemporary philosophy, including that of Huxley; in another, he attacked the thought of Darwin and Spencer. An extensive acquaintance with traditional biblical and patristic scholarship is evident in the two published works cited earlier (p. 47 and p. 117).⁴⁶ But Evans was also a revivalist, joining with Percival in the next major revival on the St. Croix, which, more than ever before, involved

⁴⁵ SSDM, 1876-77; MTMR, 1875-81

⁴⁶ NBPEI, 1913; TPW, 16 September 1881, p. 4 col. 4; SCC, 18 January 1877, p. 2 col. 4; 8 March 1877, p. 2 col. 5.

both the temperance movement and cooperation among the Protestant churches.

Since the temperance movement in St. Stephen merits a study of its own, it can only be drawn briefly into this discussion. Methodism's increasing involvement in the temperance movement over the century has already been outlined in Chapter Two (pp. 60-61). The local movement regained momentum in the mid-1870s, when there were roughly 35 liquor retailers in the parish.⁴⁷ Their denominational background was varied, and included men whose ties with evangelicalism illustrate the range and diverse meaning of denominational affiliation in terms of lifestyle. In 1872, the town council had granted liquor licenses to 26 men: nine Catholics, six Anglicans, five Presbyterians, one Universalist, one Baptist, and two Methodists. Of the latter, one was a recent migrant from the United States, whose adherence may well have been purely nominal, but the other--William Hayman--rented a pew in Old Ridge.⁴⁸ One of

⁴⁷ SCC, 23 April 1874, p. 2 col. 2; 22 April 1875, p. 2 col. 5; TPW, 18 December 1875, p. 5 col. 4.

⁴⁸ SCC, 18 April 1872, p. 2 col. 2. William Hayman appears as a farmer on the Old Ridge Road in both census returns and Hutchinson's New Brunswick Directory for 1867-68; his name appears unrevised on the Old Ridge Pew records, although Lovell's Province of New Brunswick Directory for 1871 (Montreal: John Lovell, 1871) lists only his store in town. He may have moved to St. Stephen, or, like a few other retailers, kept both a farm on the ridge and a business in the village.

the Anglican dealers was married to a Free Christian Baptist, but the most direct conflict of interest probably occurred in the Owen family. Members and major contributors of the Presbyterian Church in St. Stephen, two brothers--"grocers" like Hayman--were granted liquor licenses. Henry Owen's wife had joined the Methodist church in 1870, but still called herself a Presbyterian in the 1871 census. Her husband still retailed liquor in May 1876, and it is possible that some Methodists looked more kindly on those who incidentally sold liquor as part of a general establishment, since in the following month the couple billeted James Taylor and another Methodist minister in their home at the same address as the store. However, Margaret Owen ceased attending class meeting some time during the second half of 1877 or early 1878, though in January, the couple renewed the Wesleyan subscription she had started in 1874. Did she leave the class meeting because she had tired of it, or because of the increasingly aggressive temperance stance of the church? Alternatively, it is possible that the temperance cause (or business pragmatism) won out in the Owen family, since in 1879--the last year before the enforcement of the Canada Temperance Act--neither brother applied for a license.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Knowlton, p. 106; SCC, 11 May 1876, p. 2 col. 2; TPW, 10 June 1876, p. 189 col. 1; SCC, 23 April 1879, p. 2 col. 4; SSMR, 1870-78; TPW, 19 January 1874, p. 3 col. 3; 5

The relationship between revivalism and temperance is easier to describe than to explain with precision. Some historians have interpreted the revivals of the 1830s as forms of social control, conscious or unconscious attempts to convert individuals for the purposes of temperance.⁵⁰ One study cites a Methodist writer to argue the reverse--that in early Ontario "the temperance movement figured as an agent of Christian proselytism, an attempt to enforce sobriety as a pre-condition to religious conversion".⁵¹ In St. Stephen, the revival of the temperance movement can be interpreted either way, given the frequency of revivals in the 1870s. The first sequence--conversion followed by temperance or temperance work--appears to be in the mind of one Methodist commentator on the 1878 revival:

A very deep religious interest seems to pervade Calais and St. Stephen. Some remarkable changes are taking place. The temperance movement...is gaining immense strength...and has already done much good in several social circles.

However, both Evans and Percival had participated in the revitalized temperance movement in the spring of the previous year, and even once the revival itself had started Percival's perception reversed the order of change: "May the

January 1878, p. 8 col. 2.

⁵⁰ Sweet summarizes this literature on pp. 37-40 and 42-43.

⁵¹ F.L. Barron, "The American Origins of the Temperance Movement in Ontario, 1828-1850", Canadian Review of American Studies, 11(2), Fall 1980, pp. 137-38.

tidal wave of temperance which is sweeping across our land be followed by the wave of Divine Grace, landing thousands upon the solid Rock of ages".⁵²

Although a public Sunday Bible Class had been successfully held in Chipman's Hall since its opening in December 1877, the main revival began in Calais in January, when five hundred had reportedly attended services and inquiry meetings led by local ministers and "Col. Shaw, a gospel worker" from the Portland, Maine Young Men's Christian Association. At the same time, the union week of prayer services held every evening on the Canadian side of the river lasted well beyond the usual first week of January. Shaw moved first to Milltown, alternating between the Methodist and Congregationalist churches.⁵³ According to Percival, "more than 100 souls...found the Saviour to be precious". Shaw then joined Evans in St. Stephen, holding meetings three times a day in the Methodist Church for at least two weeks in February, and possibly longer.⁵⁴ Despite

⁵² TPW, 9 February 1878, p. 5 col. 4; SCC, 4 January 1877, p. 2 col. 1; 29 March 1877, p. 2 col. 3; TPW, 2 March 1878, p. 5 col. 2.

⁵³ SSDM, 1878; SCC; 10 January 1878, p. 2 col. 3; 24 January 1878, p. 2 col. 5; 14 February 1878, p. 2 col. 5; 21 February 1878, p. 2 col. 7.

⁵⁴ TPW, 2 March 1878, p. 5 col. 2; the minutes of the March 25 meeting of the St. Stephen Quarterly Official Board imply that the "protracted meetings" were either ongoing or had only recently ended.

the length of the revival, the actual numbers of new Methodist members were small compared with either the 1869 or 1874 revivals: at least 21 in Milltown (from the villages and Mohannes), and 41 in St. Stephen.⁵⁵ Some Methodist converts may have left the parish before ever joining a class meeting, while other revival converts may have come from and returned to other churches.

During the 1878 revival, both Evans and Percival joined the temperance lecturer D. MacKenzie Banks in meetings in St. Stephen and the surrounding area. The executives of the new Reform Clubs and Women's Christian Temperance Union had Methodist components, including some revival converts.⁵⁶ However, the temperance movement in St. Stephen had always had a wider denominational base than the revival churches, from Anglicans, Baptists, and Universalists, as well as the Charlotte County Prohibitory Alliance. Moreover, St. Stephen had a well established Catholic temperance movement. In 1874, the Courier's pages had been filled with the New Brunswick schools debate, but also reported what appears to be a proto-ecumenical Milltown temperance committee that included the Congregationslist and Methodist ministers and

⁵⁵ SSMR, MTMR, 1878-79.

⁵⁶ SCC, 3 January 1878, p. 2 col. 2; 31 January 1878, p. 2 cols. 1,5; 7 February 1878, p. 2 col. 3; 14 February 1878, p. 2 cols. 2-3; 21 February 1878, p. 2 cols. 7-8; 28 February 1878, p. 2 cols. 3,6; TPW, 16 March 1878, p. 5 col. 3.

Catholic millman Edward Curran.⁵⁷ The temperance movement continued to thrive during the second half of 1878, when the revival itself waned. The new minister on the Milltown circuit continued Methodist involvement, and in February 1879 two English women who were both evangelists and temperance activists held special services twice a day for over a week.⁵⁸ In May 1879, 86% of the county's eligible residents voted in favour of the Canada Temperance Act, approximately 81% in St. Stephen and 75% in Milltown.⁵⁹

Little membership growth occurred in the immediate aftermath of the revivals, and the St. Stephen circuit faced another financial challenge after the loss of the parsonage to fire, while the Milltown circuit experienced the conflict detailed in Chapter Three (pp. 127-30). The District Spiritual Report of 1879, perhaps unconsciously contrasting the former with the latter, wrote that "the spiritual state of the St. Stephen circuit though not marked by any great advance has been one of steady progress and Christian love and harmony have prevailed during the year." Howard Sprague

⁵⁷ Acheson, "Denominationalism", p. 182; SCC, 19 March 1874, p. 2 col. 4; 14 May 1874, p. 2 col. 4.

⁵⁸ SCC, 20 November 1878, p. 2 col. 3; TPW, 15 August 1879, p. 5 col. 1; SCC, 12 February 1879, p. 2 col. 3.

⁵⁹ Peter DeLottinville, "The St. Croix Cotton Manufacturing Company and Its Influence on the St. Croix Community, 1880-1892", (M.A. Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1979), pp. 269-72.

returned to the parish in 1879 to serve the St. Stephen circuit, but the missing membership returns do not indicate how many of the new members by 1882 had joined during his first two years.⁶⁰ The Conference may have appointed Charles W. Dutcher to Milltown with his predecessor's difficulties in mind, perhaps hoping that he would both improve Milltown finances and yet appeal to an economically diverse circuit. A Mount Allison graduate, Dutcher was remembered for temporal and spiritual gifts: his "special aptitude" for financial matters, his practical skills as an inventive farmer with a patented potato digging machine, and for his success in "winning souls for Christ". Moreover, he had served in St. David in the early 1870s, and responded to Baptist challenges both in his pulpit and in the pages of the Courier.⁶¹ Dutcher's rhetorical skills clearly remained unimpaired, for in 1880 he led the last revival of the decade in Upper Mills. Yet although 40 individuals "manifested special interest" during the revival, the circuit gained only 21 new members in 1880, and five in 1881.⁶²

⁶⁰ SSDM, 1879; SSMR, 1879-82.

⁶¹ NBPEI, 1895; TPW, 26 January 1883, p. 5 col. 2; Scientific American, 13 January 1883, p. 22; 26 January 1883, p. 5 col. 2; see the Courier from March to June 1871 for this debate.

⁶² SCC, 19 February 1880, p. 2 col. 6; MTMR, 1880-81.

A reading of pre-1858 sources⁶³ as well as spiritual histories suggests that revivalism in St. Stephen may have been stronger in the 1860s and 1870s than it had been in the previous two decades. In the absence of comparable community studies, it is difficult to determine whether clerical Methodism's own jeremiads over late nineteenth century church growth were any more accurate than those of the Puritans. According to one 1879 writer in the Wesleyan, there were some "localities even in our revival church which have not been religiously disturbed for ten, fifteen or twenty years".⁶⁴ In contrast, in all but seven years⁶⁵ between 1859 and 1881, some part of the parish of St. Stephen witnessed a revival: in some years only modest attempts or moderate successes, but in 1861, 1864, 1869, 1874, and 1878 relatively large and lengthy revivals. Not surprisingly, although 121 individuals joined in other years, 561 or 82% of the 682 church members not already members by 1855 joined in a revival year. In all, at least 789 men and women belonged for some time to the class meetings within the two circuits. Yet the total yearly membership of the combined circuits sank as low as 150 in

⁶³ Reports from the circuits can be found in BNAWMM, 1841-48 and TPW, 1850-58.

⁶⁴ TPW, 11 January 1879, p. 4 cols. 2-3.

⁶⁵ The years without a special revival effort or significant membership increase are 1862-63, 1865-67, 1875, and 1881.

1863, and never rose above 351.

Was this discrepancy between effort and results a general feature of the Eastern British America Conference? In 1869, one writer remarked on the "snail-like progress of our Eastern British America Methodism", despite the greater number of revivals in the 1860s and the greater number of ministers. The denomination's first historian concluded that mid century membership growth was slow but picked up in the 1870s. Yet in 1877, "Layman" echoed the 1869 writer, resummarizing the problem with "considerable dissatisfaction":

It is certainly to be regretted that, with the number of ministers engaged in the work, and the other agencies employed, we cannot report a decided increase in our membership. During the past year there have been on various circuits revivals of religion and large ingatherings to the Church. What has become of these?

The first answer to his question might have been that, as conversion and revival accounts suggest, not all revival converts joined the church. The editor, however, focused on three points: Methodism's narrow test of membership; the accuracy of its returns; and the effect of the latter on net church growth. Using the example of the Nova Scotia Conference, he pointed out that new members had joined during the previous year, and that two thirds of membership losses in 1877 were due to death or removal from the circuit

and often the region. In fact, "while a membership decrease may be reported, an actual advancement has still been made in soul-saving".⁶⁶

Although insisting that Protestant churches "formed remarkably stable islands" within a very transient society, Paul Johnson was one of the first historians to demonstrate the opposite by quantifying the mobility within nineteenth century voluntarist churches in Rochester, New York. Although of men found in directories, higher proportions of church members could be linked to two or more years, a considerable proportion of church members could not be linked to directories at all. Considering male church members only, Johnson found that "over half the men admitted to Rochester churches in the 1830s moved into Rochester, joined a church, and left town within a maximum of four years". Studies of Baltimore, Utica, and Philadelphia churches have also found "volatile" congregations and "peripatetic" church members. Of Baltimore Presbyterian members in 1847, 40% had left by 1857 and 55% by 1860. Utica church records from the 1820s and 1830s show that within five years of joining, 30% of new members formally requested letters of dismissal before leaving their communities, while others simply disappeared from the

⁶⁶ TPW, 10 November 1869, p. 2 cols. 5-6; T. Watson Smith, II, pp. 470-71; TPW, 29 September 1877, p. 4 cols. 1-2.

records.⁶⁷ For most of the nineteenth century in British Methodism, aggregate records suggest that revival converts tended to remain members for about two years, but that over the long run Methodism retained only one in six new members.⁶⁸

For Methodism in St. Stephen, it is possible to describe membership losses in more detail, whether from death, transience, or declension. Of the 789 sometime church members, 90 or 11% died 'in the Society'. As part three of this thesis will show, older adherents were more likely to join the church than younger, and older new church members were more likely to remain church members. Moreover, obituaries suggest that a number of younger church members joined at the onset of chronic illness. Of the 90 deaths, 78 could be linked to a census, of whom 14% were under 40 when they died, and 18% were aged 40 to 54.

As indicated in Chapter Four (p. 150), commentators more often cited transience and out-migration in explaining membership loss. Published totals of removals are available only for the Nova Scotia Conference after 1875. They show

⁶⁷ Johnson, pp. 49-50, 158-59; Bruce Laurie, Working People of Philadelphia (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), p. 50; Franch, pp. 371-72; Ryan, pp. 80, 258.

⁶⁸ Walker, p. 267; Luker, p. 615; Currie, p. 110; the latter author argues that membership turnover lowered by the end of the century, with Methodist churches retaining roughly half their members.

that each year between 1875 and 1882 at least 3-5% of the total Conference membership moved outside their respective circuits.⁶⁹ This does not seem as substantial as contemporary laments implied, but encompassed local variation and considerable cumulative loss.⁷⁰ In St. Stephen, the 789 sometime church members made 632 'exits' from local class meetings, some more than once, and of these 632, the reasons for 515 or 87% are indicated or can be deduced.⁷¹ Unfortunately, complete and precise records for a single year per circuit are only available for certain years,⁷² but these suggest that in the 1860s, removals constituted between 3-5% of the previous year's membership, and after 1873 between 7-15%. Of the 477 continuous church members no longer on the lists by 1881, 35% had left the parish, while of the 105 intermittent church members, 42% either interrupted or concluded their membership by leaving

⁶⁹ Although some years indicate totals of those received by membership transfer from one circuit to another, there is no way of telling how many of these were also counted as removals (as opposed to migrants from outside the Conference).

⁷⁰ NSC, 1875-82.

⁷¹ Individuals found in the parish between 1861 and 1881 after disappearing from the records were assumed to have ceased their membership; in some years, the combination of known aggregate totals and available information also made the types of exits apparent.

⁷² For both circuits in 1865, 1866, and 1877-79; for St. Stephen only in 1861, 1870, 1871, 1876, and 1880; and for Milltown only in 1867 and 1874.

the parish.⁷³

A better sense of the overall transience of church members can be found by establishing what proportion of them were linked to one or more census returns.⁷⁴ Of the 789 members between 1860 and 1881, roughly one fourth were not linked to any census between 1851 and 1871. Most of these individuals were truly new to the parish (surnames and other information suggest that perhaps one third were related to census families or resided on the American side of the river). Of those linked to one or more census returns, 480 or 61% were old enough to have been in all three: of this group, 36% remained in the parish between 1851 and 1871, 36% were linked to the parish in only two census years,⁷⁵ and 28% in only one. Of the 81 church members only old enough to have been in St. Stephen in 1861 and 1871, 21% were new in 1871 (18 church members who joined in the 1870s were aged 10 or under in 1871).

⁷³ For 21% of the continuous members and 5% of the intermittent church members, the reasons for their disappearance from the records could not be identified. Anecdotal information and aggregate totals suggest that very few of these were deaths.

⁷⁴ Deaths were not eliminated from this analysis, because 81% of all those who died in the Society could be linked to the parish in two or more census years.

⁷⁵ As indicated in the previous chapter (p. 00), a few Methodist members were found in only one or two census returns but from membership records were clearly residents in the other census years.

The most troubling kind of membership loss was declension. As in Wesley's time, clergy admitted that "numbers who profess conversion during special revival services in a short time settle down to a mere formal routine of religious duty or lose their interest in religion, and return to the world". As this suggests, there were various kinds of declension, ranging from "manifest indifference" to "immorality". Explanations varied from the all-purpose--such as inadequate pastoral care from clergy, lay leaders or fellow members--to the more elliptical, such as "business entanglements and the smouldering fire of old animosities". To account for those who left seemingly on account of "indifference", some blamed clergymen for neglecting the doctrine of Christian perfection or the possibility of entire sanctification.⁷⁶ Another writer summarized the psychological reasons why individuals, particularly members on trial, left the class meeting.

They are harassed by doubts and fears. They get overwhelmed with discouragement and shrink from the profession involved in complete membership...whether from natural indecision or because (sic)not prepared to make the necessary sacrifices.

⁷⁶ TPW, 15 March 1879, p. 1 cols. 6-8; SJDM, 1870-71; TPW, 14 October 1863, p. 2 cols. 2-3; 15 October 1880, p. 4 cols. 2-3.

This writer and others saw the problem as inherent in contemporary revivalism itself.

In our anxiety to see results we unwittingly and unwisely assure men whose feelings had been aroused by the scenes around them, rather than by the work of the truth and spirit within them, that the repose which they feel after the subsidence of their unwanted emotions, is the rest of the soul.

More generally, they cited the failure of local leaders and members to nurture and support individuals when the revival had ended or the itinerant had left.⁷⁷

It is difficult to move from these general treatments of the problem to speculate on the experience of St. Stephen Methodists. In 1877, the spiritual reports from the two circuits mention dropping individuals from the membership list after repeatedly speaking to them "without effect" about their nonattendance at "public worship and class meeting". Of the 477 continuous church members, at least 27% ceased their membership while remaining in the parish. Of the 105 intermittent church members, just over half had ceased their membership for a while.⁷⁸ The end result of the combination of mortality with transience and declension was that the two circuits kept only a minority of church members for more than a decade, and many for only a few

⁷⁷ TPW, 12 February 1873, p. 1 col. 1; 16 March 1870, p. 2 col. 1; 9 April 1881, p. 4 cols. 1-2; 12 February 1873, p. 2 col. 1.

⁷⁸ SSDM, 1877; SSMR, MTMR, 1860-81.

years. Of the 527 church members no longer in the records by 1881, 39% were gone within 1-2 two years, and 75% within 1-6 years.

Establishing the rate of church membership must take this turnover into consideration. As the following table shows, of the 699 Methodist adherents over the age of 14 in 1861, only 22% were church members that year. However, another 7% had been members between 1856 and 1860 or would join between 1862 and 1865. Apart from those who would join after 1865, ex-members from the 1850s and nonmember lay leaders, 64% of adherents in this age group were never church members between 1851 and 1870.⁷⁹ Similarly, of the 1024 Methodist adherents over the age of 14 in 1871, 21% were church members that year, and 9% had been members between 1866 and 1870 or would join between 1872 and 1875. In sum, in each census year, the proportion of current members was roughly one fifth, and the proportion of sometime members in the surrounding decades was only one third.⁸⁰

Local proportions of church membership reflected both the course of revivalism within the parish and subtler aspects of 'place'. The 1861 table above shows the lowest membership

⁷⁹ To make the 1861 and 1871 figures comparable, 30 members who joined after 1870 were subsumed with nonmembers in the first table, and nine ex-members from the 1850s were subsumed with nonmembers in the second.

⁸⁰ Over 1851-81, this proportion rose to roughly one half.

Table 2: Methodist Adherents

1861 ADHERENTS OVER 14	LOCATION								Tot.
	V/OR/BR	SS	Un.	G/B	Mt	Up.	Moh.		
Member 1861	45	41	14	20	28	3	5	22%	156
Member 1856-65	10	19	11	2	3	1	1	7%	47
Member 1866-70	3	5	3	3	7	2	1	3%	24
Ex-member 1850s	4	1		2	1		2	1%	10
QOB only 1861-81	3	7		1	1		1	2%	13
Adherent 1851-70	119	121	29	73	55	25	27	64%	449
1861 TOTAL	184	194	57	101	95	31	37		699
1871 ADHERENTS OVER 14									
Member 1871	43	51	37	19	32	27	5	21%	214
Member 1866-75	10	32	4	11	4	9	17	8%	87
Member 1861-65	9	15	9	2	2		1	4%	38
Member 1876-80	1	8	2		2	13		3%	26
QOB only 1861-81	4	3			1			1%	7
Adherent 1861-80	162	175	73	59	83	73	26	64%	652
1871 TOTAL	229	284	125	91	124	122	49		1,024

rate for the surrounding decades among adherents in Upper Mills (19%), where a church had only recently been gathered in a schoolhouse, and in nearby Mohannas (27%). Although in both years Mohannas had the lowest rate of current membership, by 1871 almost half of its adherents had joined or would join in the surrounding decades. Union Mills was still a distinct village in 1861, and its prayer and class meetings were right at hand and not duplicated by any other

formal religious or social gatherings. Although only 57 Methodist adherents over the age of 14 lived there in 1861, half of them were church members in the 1850s or 1860s. This proportion was slightly lower in 1871, when only 42% of adherents were members in the surrounding decades, but by then was matched by that of the expanded group of Methodist adherents in Upper Mills.

As the preceding table shows, St. Stephen and, to a lesser extent, Milltown had similar rates of church membership, but despite the revivals in 1861, 1864 and 1871, the Old Ridge group in the latter year had the lowest proportion of sometime members in the surrounding decades: only 29%. One Methodist commentator on church growth stressed that Methodism made more progress in country circuits than in cities, because religious services in the former were so sparse that the community felt obligated to uphold them. However, the St. Stephen experience suggests that within country circuits, there might be differences between places, or perhaps between villages and settlements. This might support one claim (albeit disputed) made in the 1878 debate on the class meeting that it was particularly hard to get Methodist supporters to attend the meetings in the country.⁸¹ In fact, if St. Stephen ministers and class leaders had insisted on holding the rural class meetings

⁸¹ TPW, 14 November 1860, p. 2 cols. 2-3; "Report", 1878.

every week as in the villages, rural membership rates might have even been lower.

The village class meetings had generally higher membership turnover, reflecting the greater transience of their communities. Of the 527 continuous or intermittent church members who had left or died by 1881, 197 started⁸² their membership in the St. Stephen class meetings, and this group of 197 had the highest proportion of those gone from the records within two years (57%). At the other extreme, the Old Ridge and Getchell/Barter Settlement groups of church members (39 and 29) had, at 26% and 38%, the highest proportions of members who remained so for over 12 years. However, the Old Ridge members and the 148 who had started in Milltown meetings also had--after St. Stephen--higher proportions of those gone within two years: 38% and 34%. Of the 425 continuous or intermittent members with known reasons for their ceasing to be listed as members, the rural class meetings had higher proportions of deaths and the villages had higher proportions of removals. However, the proportions of those ceasing to be members but remaining in the parish were not obviously patterned.

⁸² Some individuals did move within the parish during these two decades, but in this analysis they were counted as part of the first place in which they joined.

The 1879 lament over revivalism in Maritime Methodism that began this discussion produced as evidence of spiritual decline the claim that even in places "where strangers are moving in and out perpetually and which, consequently, should, to overtake the needs of the population, be in a perpetual agitation of revival, there has been no signal religious movement for some time".⁸³ Whether exceptional or typical in Maritime Methodism, the villages along the St. Croix did experience both considerable transience and frequent revivals. Was this simply because the leadership held more revivals in villages, or because villages provided fresh audiences, or because somehow this form of social experience encouraged revivals? This question relates to one of the central themes of transience studies, expressed in different forms: did transience foster or hinder the growth of partyism, class culture, common cause in a voluntary association, or a sense of ethnic or civic community?⁸⁴

The framers of this question have been criticized for excessive emphasis on transience as a form or agent of social discontinuity and insufficient attention to the

⁸³ TPW, 11 January 1879, p. 4 cols. 2-3.

⁸⁴ Stephan Thernstrom and Peter R. Knights, "Men in Motion: Some Data and Speculations about Urban Population Mobility in Nineteenth Century America", Industrialization and Urbanization, ed. Theodore K. Rabb (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 198-99; Katz et al., pp. 129-30.

perpetuation of cultural or familial links. For some, such as Janet Grimmer, a Methodist member from Old Ridge who moved to Minnesota and became a member and Sunday school teacher in the local Methodist church, denominational commitment increased with emigration.⁸⁵ The obvious effects of transience on a religious group, whether negative, such as the removal of members from the parish, or positive, such as the addition of new personalities to the spiritual life of a church or new sources of lay leadership or financial support, have already been noted. In terms of human motivation, one can only speculate on its more equivocal effects: transience might discourage formal social commitments among the pool of current or potential members and adherents as a result of an individual's uncertainty about his or her future, or it might encourage them as a compensation for this uncertainty.

Were transient Methodists any more or less likely to join local class meetings during the 1860s and 1870s? To begin with, any social explanation of church membership must be very modest, since the foregoing analysis suggests that at least half of all adherents never joined the church at all. Moreover, without information about those who arrived between census returns, analyzing this question is

⁸⁵ Brookes, "The Exodus", pp. 2-6; SCC, 29 August 1878, p. 3 col. 1.

technically difficult, since obviously those who are not yet in or have left the parish cannot join a local class meeting. In 1861, the 156 current members constituted 29% of adherents linked to 1851, but only 13% of newcomers; similarly the 214 current members in 1871 constituted 25% of those linked to the parish in the previous census year and again 13% of newcomers. However, the 76 Methodist adherents over 14 in 1861 who would join the church between 1862 and 1881 made up roughly 15% of newcomers to the parish, and only 8% of residents since 1851. In 1871, the 109 adherents who would join between 1872 and 1881 constituted 9% of newcomers since 1861 and 12% of those linked to the parish in the previous census year. Analysis of all Methodist adherents in either census who were or would have been over the age of 24 in 1871 suggests a pattern which may account for these inconclusive findings. Of the 1,072 Methodist adherents in 1861 or 1871 over the age of 24 in 1871, the proportions of sometime church members between 1851 and 1881 among those who remained in the parish during those decades and among those linked to only two census returns were almost identical: 40% and 38%. However, only 22% of Methodist adherents who appeared in only one census return were ever church members during these years. In other words, the most transient were less likely to join the church, but

newcomers with some residential stability were as likely to join or not to join as longtime residents.

The most transient were also less present among the 70 members of the Quarterly Official Boards between 1861 and 1881. Only 9% were linked to the parish in only one census year, 44% to two, and 47% to three. However, British (mainly Irish) immigrants were overrepresented, forming almost one fifth of the Board, although they constituted only 10% of the group of 1,072 older adherents. In fact, the only obvious pattern of church membership in relation to the experience of transience was not transience itself, but the experience of immigration from the British Isles. Of the 1,072 adherents, one third of the 928 New Brunswick or American born joined the church between 1851 and 1881, compared with 61% of the 108 born in Great Britain.⁸⁶ Moreover, among the 576 church members with known birthplaces, North Americans had the highest 'attrition' rates, while 40% of the British Methodists survived or remained as members for 13 or more years, and another 30% lasted 7 to 12 years.⁸⁷ Nearly all British Methodists were Irish or English, with the former having slightly higher

⁸⁶ Forty percent of the 36 born elsewhere joined the church in these decades.

⁸⁷ This group includes those who were still members in 1881, since the focus was persistence in rather than departure from the records.

rates of membership and persistence as a member. Although as the next chapter will show, many were converts from other denominations, this by itself does not explain the greater church involvement of this group. Of the 71 British immigrant Methodists found in both 1861 and 1871 (and over the age of 24 in the latter year), 63% of the 30 new Methodists compared with 83% of the 36 who were Methodists in both years joined the church between 1851 and 1881.⁸⁸ Unfortunately, there is little literary evidence from St. Stephen to flesh out this pattern; in fact, one tribute to a farming family at the Ledge provides ambivalent evidence of religious ties and the immigrant experience. John and Mary Barter had left St. Mary's Church, Devonshire in the late 1820s; their first ecclesiastical home must have been important to have been so recalled fifty years later for a local paper, yet in 1861 they were listed as Methodists, returning to the Church of England, perhaps the evangelical Trinity church, by 1871.⁸⁹ As the next two chapters will elaborate, the nature of Irish Protestantism may also have played a part in explaining the greater church involvement of British immigrants.

⁸⁸ Of five British ex-Methodists by 1871, only one was a church member.

⁸⁹ SCC, 29 January 1879, p. 2 col. 3.

The combination of revivalism, membership turnover, and transience kept the class meetings in St. Stephen, particularly, those in the villages, in a state of flux. However, membership was only one form of church involvement, and--as argued in Chapter Three (p. 91)--as much a social as a spiritual distinction within Methodist congregations. In 1881, the Pastoral Address of the New Brunswick Conference lamented that so few, even of the "more thoughtful and seriously disposed members of our own congregations, in penitent and believing consecration to, and acceptance of Christ, identify themselves with the Church". Estimating nineteenth century church attendance is much more difficult than identifying church members. Although John Webster Grant's earlier work repeated the 'golden age' assumption about the nineteenth century, that "even the irreligious usually went to church on Sunday", his later study of religion in Ontario noted that an impressionistic estimate of church attendance among the Toronto population in 1836 was not that different from the results of an 1882 Globe survey: both suggested that less than half went to church. Government counts of church attendance in Saint John during the 1840s suggest that "perhaps two out of every three permanent residents of the city and surrounding suburbs may

have attended services on a typical Sunday".⁹⁰

The most common measure of church attendance reported by Methodist clergy was the ratio of hearers to members. T. Watson Smith claimed that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, this proportion (his figures suggest roughly 3.5 to 1) was lower than that at century's end, because being a Methodist hearer was initially almost as sectarian a decision as being a member, and because hearers were less likely to include whole families. By 1845, this ratio in the New Brunswick District was 5.4 to 1, and one mid-century traveller observed of Methodism in Maine that its proportion of hearers to members corresponded to the "common rates of proportion" in both England and North America: between 4 and 5 to 1.⁹¹ The ratio of hearers to members in nineteenth century Cornish Methodism, which was particularly enthusiastic, appears to have hovered around 3 to 1, but the editor of the Wesleyan lamented in 1878 that the regional proportion was 4 to 1. Using figures for church seatings, Paul Goodman has calculated similar ratios for New England

⁹⁰ TPW, 29 July 1881, p. 5 cols. 2-3; Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era, p. 10; A Profusion of Spires, p. 197; T. W. Acheson, Saint John: The Making of a Colonial Urban Community (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 118.

⁹¹ T. Watson Smith, I, p. 343; BNAWMM, January 1845, p. 25; James Dixon, Personal Narrative of a Tour Through a Part of the United States and Canada With Notices of the History and Institutions of Methodism in America (New York: Lane and Scott, 1850), p. 310.

voluntarist churches in 1850 and 1860, showing that most fell between 3 and 4 to 1. The Methodist figures in 1850 ranged from 2.8 in Maine to 5.6 in Massachusetts; in 1860 the ratio in Maine had risen to 3.3, while that of Vermont was the lowest at 2.8 and that of Rhode Island had more than doubled to 7.0.⁹²

Such changes could have reflected an increase in the number of hearers or in the proportion of hearers who were members, but judging by the limited evidence for St. Stephen, Methodist congregations might increase during revivals, but did not expand and contract in the same manner as the membership. In the village of St. Stephen, the regular congregation had clearly grown during the 1860s and early 1870s, since the Methodists built a larger church in 1876 with a seating of roughly 550. In that same year, the minister remarked that, despite significant losses to the membership from deaths and removals, "There is no perceptible difference in the Sabbath congregation." Generally, Sunday services were much better attended than weekday prayer meetings, but even a special service led by the newly ordained clergy of the Saint John District in 1874 and held at 6:30 a.m. on a weekday reportedly drew "respectable audiences".⁹³

⁹² TPW, 10 August 1878, p. 4 cols. 2-4; Luker, p. 614; Goodman, p. 185.

Calculating these ratios for St. Stephen can be done only tentatively, since clerical estimates of hearers, particularly in the early period, appear to be very impressionistic with only sporadic change. Before the creation of the St. James circuit in 1869, these estimates included services in both parishes. They suggest that most ratios of hearers to members during the 1860s fell between 3 and 7 to 1, with particularly large congregations in Milltown in 1859, and a higher ratio in St. Stephen in 1862 because of the post-revival membership drop off. In the 1870s for the parish itself, the ratios ranged between 3 and 5 to 1. By the centenary of Atlantic Methodism, some commentators had rather sweepingly begun to refer to census adherents as if they were synonymous with hearers. At first glance, this seems not unreasonable, since aggregate proportions of adherence to membership in 1881 in the region ranged between 4 and 5 to 1.⁹⁴ Similarly, in both 1861 and 1871 in St. Stephen, one fifth of adherents--but adherents over the age of 14--were current members in each census year. But in St. Stephen, the total of nominal census adherence was by no means identical with the regular

⁹³ TPW, 18 January 1876, p. 13 cols. 3-4; SJDM, 1871-73; TPW, 22 June 1874, p. 2 col. 2.

⁹⁴ Stephen Huestis, p. 103; Robert Wilson, Methodism in the Maritime Provinces, p. 16; NBPEI and NSC, 1881; Census of Canada, 1881.

congregations of local churches. Fortunately, the best estimates of actual church attendance come from the years on either side of the 1871 census, in which ministers identified the number of families attending public worship. While these still appear to be estimates, they vary more than the larger totals of 'hearers', ranging from 1870 to 1874 between 165 and 210 families, The total in 1871 of 170 families could have included 57% of the 290 households within the two circuits where at least two individuals in the same family were Methodist adherents. This is lower than the finding of the 1896 Globe survey of Toronto Methodists, which suggested that three fourths of Methodist adherents were churchgoers, but may reflect the difference between a minister's count of the faithful, and a family's perception of itself in response to a survey, in which churchgoer might mean a wider range of participation and frequency.⁹⁵

In fact, the actual proportion of regular attenders among Methodist adherents was probably lower. As the next chapter will show, the rural congregations served their entire communities and even village congregations were multi-denominational. This chapter has set forth the 'topography'⁹⁶ of Methodist revivalism and church growth in

⁹⁵ SJDM, 1870-73; Grant, Profusion of Spires, p. 197.

⁹⁶ This usage, coined by Richard Carwardine, encompasses the ecclesiastical, social, and geographic aspects of revivalism.

St. Stephen; the next sets forth the topography of its rivals. The associational fluidity within St. Stephen's Methodist churches arose not just from revivalism, declension, and transience, but from their repeatedly re-numbered external constituencies of former and future Methodists.

Chapter VI

The Dynamics of Church Growth (3): Proselytism

In 1870, a critical letter from 'Layman' prompted a minister to explain the slower tempo of contemporary Methodist growth. He began by arguing that "Our church in these Provinces is composed, as anyone can see, of members gathered from every communion". Methodism had offered a unique denominational style at the beginning of the century, but other churches now "adopted many measures...which we alone employed years ago", hence the diminished growth. In a rejoinder, 'Layman' denied that "Methodism, in this Province, ever brought over great numbers from other churches". Rather, "it became almost a proverb, that while Methodist ministers spent strength in labouring for the conversion of sinners, certain other ministers gave their attention to the gathering of the converts into their fold." Instead, Methodism by its own merits attracted the "perishing multitude". 'Layman' added, without any apparent sense of concession, that some were Anglicans by baptism, but really "belonged to the world--members of Satan's

fold...legitimate conquests from the enemy's ranks".¹ In 1878, a few speakers in the debate over class meeting attendance echoed this exchange over the relationships between Methodist growth, Methodist identity, and other denominations. One minister claimed that "many distinguished Christians would come to them from the Church of England, and particularly from the Presbyterian Church, were it not for the class meeting difficulty". A layman contended that "the Methodist Church should be broad enough to receive Christians from other denominations". In contrast, defenders of the rule claimed that any change would "open the door to persons whom we did not want in the Church", and that Methodism had gained far more members by class meetings than it had ever lost because of them.²

As these exchanges imply, the flow of laity between Methodism and other denominations went both ways. One discussion of declension admitted that even a "small proportion" of church members moved to other churches, usually as a result of childhood or "personal associations, or of some specially adverse influence". Perhaps larger was the category described by James Taylor, writing about the Milltown circuit in 1874:

¹ TPW, 29 December 1869, p. 2 cols. 3-4; 19 January 1870, p. 2 cols. 5-6.

² "Report", 1878.

At different periods, persons belonging to the other congregations have found the Lord in our church, and though not united to us are seen, and heard, occasionally, in their birthplace, whither they come to revive happy associations of the past and get new blessings.

At first Taylor disclaimed an expansive and aggressive vision of church growth, such as that displayed by those speakers in 1878 who would have changed the class meeting rule in order to draw in the followers of other religious groups.

Were it not that Methodism never stoops to the meanness of proselyting [sic], some of these might be members of our branch of Zion. Our mission is nobler than the inglorious one of robbing other churches....We can wish those who may have been awakened and converted under our ministry and then voluntarily gone back to the church they were wont to attend--God speed.

Yet with unintentional irony, he concluded with his "opinion" that: "Stepmothers should not be preferred whilst our real mother lives in our midst".³

The historical assessment of inter-denominational shifts in affiliation has been as impressionistic and varied as these contemporary comments. Although Goldwin French once speculated that in eighteenth century Nova Scotia denominational affiliation was "determined largely by past associations and traditions", with Methodism largely English or Loyalist, his hope that scholars would qualify this has

³ TPW, 12 February 1873, p. 1 col. 1; 20 April 1874, p. 2 cols. 4-5.

been fulfilled by studies of evangelicalism in Planter communities.⁴ Unless entirely made up of Methodist immigrants, the first generation of Methodism in a North American community was necessarily multi-denominational. From the formalizing of ecclesiastical structures, historians have often assumed that denominational boundaries later hardened, and that "cross-denominational symbiosis gradually gave way to denominational speciation".⁵ What this actually meant in terms of lay attitudes towards denominational affiliation and local inter-church relations has yet to be explored adequately. Although he has supported this general argument elsewhere, John Webster Grant has also modified it, noting that although interchurch relations had improved by the time of Confederation, "accessions of members from other churches were greeted with unembarrassed delight".⁶ The experience of Methodism in St. Stephen

⁴ Goldwin French, "Religion and Society in Late Eighteenth Century Nova Scotia", Acadiensis, (Spring 1975), p. 109; See Allen Robertson, "Methodism Among Nova Scotia's Yankee Planters", and Daniel Goodwin, "From Disunity to Integration: Evangelical Religion and Society in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, 1761-1830" in They Planted Well: New England Planters in Maritime Canada, ed. Margaret Conrad (Fredericton, N.B.: Acadiensis Press, 1988).

⁵ Clark, pp. 172, 197; Donald Akenson, The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), pp. 223, 230-31.

⁶ Grant, A Profusion of Spires, p. 225; Grant, Church in the Canadian Era, p. 1.

suggests that "denominational mobility"⁷ or inter-denominational moves by laity, multi-denominational congregations, and, as the next chapter will show, also multi-denominational families persisted well beyond the settling of the community. Rooted in the comparative experience of other churches in the parish and facilitated by proto-ecumenical activities, the flow of lay men and women between Methodism and other denominations most exemplifies the nineteenth century precedent to contemporary 'consumer religion'.

St. Stephen's denominational diversity reflected its cultural ties with both New England and Great Britain. The three smallest religious groups in 1861--the Baptists, Congregationalists, and Universalists--originated within the former. One denominational historian of the Baptists argued that unlike the Methodists who had "drawn largely from the Episcopalians" and benefited from immigration, the Baptists had developed almost entirely out of conversions from other denominations or those with no church at all. Early Methodist clergy recognized that the Baptists were their greatest rivals, and T. Watson Smith would admit in retrospect that Baptist preachers were often better "reapers", gathering a number of previously Methodist

⁷ Kutolowski, p. 13.

converts.⁸ Baptist growth preempted Methodist expansion in much of the province during the critical decades of settlement, but McColl's foothold in Charlotte County remained virtually secure. Nevertheless, overt competition and controversy between Baptist and Methodist clergy persisted in St. David for many decades. One Methodist minister wrote in 1854 that he "could not guard all parts of his extensive field from the invasions" of those who "believe that Immersionists were all the people in the world that preached and practised the Gospel" and who "abuse other denominations".⁹ McColl had reported conflicts with New Light preachers who allegedly attempted to disrupt Methodist meetings and secure their own converts, but the Methodists kept their organizational monopoly on religious enthusiasm within most of the parish of St. Stephen until late in the century. Local Baptists travelled to the Ledge or crossed the river to Calais to worship, until regular services commenced in the village of St. Stephen in 1869.¹⁰

⁸ Edward M. Saunders, History of the Baptists of the Maritime Provinces (Halifax, N.S.: Press of John Burgoyne, 1902), p. 466; French, Parsons and Politics, p. 90; T. Watson Smith, II, pp. 422-23.

⁹ D. G. Bell, ed. New Light Baptist Journals of James Manning and James Innis (Hantsport, N.S.: Lancelot Press, 1984), pp. 172-73; TPW, 4 May 1854, p. 1 col. 6.

¹⁰ BNAWMM, September 1841, pp. 491-92, January 1842, p. 9; May 1842, p. 162; Harry W. Martin, A Century of Christian Adventure 1869-1969 - 100th Anniversary Union Street Baptist Church, St. Stephen, New Brunswick (St. Stephen,

According to T. Watson Smith, Methodism gained many converts "from the wrecks of the Congregational churches, weakened through the influence of the Revolutionary War, and broken down through the New Light agitation". Pre-Loyalist Congregationalists were among McColl's early converts, and McColl occasionally supplied the Calais Congregational church when their regular leader was absent. Methodists and Congregationalists continued to visit each other's churches, but in 1845 a socially elite group of Milltown Methodists seceded and built a Congregationalist church on the New Brunswick side of the river. For some "more genteel Methodist dissidents", the next move was to Universalism, which had a church in Milltown by 1836.¹¹ Despite the bitterness of the the division, flow among these groups persisted: Robert Cooney reported "crowded" morning and evening services in Milltown in 1853, due to the absence of the Congregational minister. The Universalist Society remained very small; with only 16 members by 1859, it disbanded ten years later, some joining the Calais Unitarians, others the Milltown Congregationalists. From 29 members at its founding in 1846, the latter had grown to 120

N.B.: St. Croix Printing and Publishing Company, 1969), pp. 1-2.

¹¹ T. Watson Smith, II, p. 348; BNAWMM, September 1841, pp. 493, 496; SCC, 17 October 1895, p. 2 col. 2; Acheson, "Denominationalism", pp. 139, 230-31.

by 1875, and Methodist comments suggest that its congregation and Sunday school presented a "powerful competition". In 1866, William Wilson wrote that despite long memories of the schism, the Milltown circuit "was again gathering strength". In 1875, James Taylor also recalled the "disruption", and cited the oftquoted biblical admonition as the model of interchurch relations: "If Ephraim does not vex Judah, nor Judah Ephraim, but each fulfills its proper mission".¹²

As in the rest of the province, Anglicans in St. Stephen shared a mixture of Loyalist and immigrant religious traditions, particularly of the Church of Ireland. Although their church incorporated in 1802, the Anglicans did not acquire their own minister until 1811.¹³ T. Watson Smith regretted that early Methodists were not "unanimous" in their attitude towards the Church of England. Although the Yorkshire Methodists who had settled in the Chignecto Peninsula "had no scruples about entire separation...the smaller body of Methodists, which had reached the Provinces

¹² Cooney, p. 178; Knowlton, pp. 64, 89-90; SSDM, 1877; TPW, 28 February 1866, p. 2 col. 5; 20 April 1874, p. 2 cols. 4-5.

¹³ O. S. Newnham, "The Church in the Deanery of St. Andrews", The Progress of the Church in the Seven Rural Deaneries of the Diocese of Fredericton (Fredericton: Diocesan Church Society, 1897), pp. 27-28; BNAWMM, September 1841, p. 493; Acheson, "Denominationalism", pp. 39-40.

at the close of the war, had certain Episcopal predilections". Smith admitted some ultimate benefit to flow between the two denominations, claiming that the habit of Anglicans in renting pews in Methodist churches when no Church of England clergyman was available strengthened Anglican "resistance to 'Ritualism'". Whatever contribution such Methodists made to Anglican growth was offset by conversions to Methodism, the result, according to Smith, of the "lack of evangelical religion" in the Church of England.¹⁴

Curate and later rector in St. Stephen from 1821 to 1865, Rev. Skeffington Thomson established chapels in Milltown and Upper Mills in the 1830s. But despite the influx of British immigrants during this decade, the Church of England did not prosper outside the village of St. Stephen. According to George A. Boardman, Thomson was "never a great favorite at Milltown", despite his acknowledged abilities:

It was said that he did not believe in such newfangled notions as temperance societies and Sunday schools. At any rate but few went to the Episcopal church, while crowds attended the Methodist services.

Although Boardman and his fellow lodger walked to church together, Tappan was one of the few who resisted Methodism. Boardman recollected their exchanges on this subject with humour:

¹⁴ T. Watson Smith, II, pp. 348, 423, 426.

I used to urge him to take a seat in the Methodist church with me, promising to go with him next Sabbath, and saying there would not be a dozen at his church, but 'No' he would say 'don't you know what Dr. Watts says': "Broad is the road that leads to death/And many go together there/But wisdom shows a narrow path/With here and there a traveller".

Tappan's road was indeed lonely, since the two chapels were so neglected they were abandoned by the 1860s.¹⁵

The Presbyterian experience demonstrates even more how Methodism's early establishment checked the growth of other churches. Despite the Scottish origin of the 74th Highlanders and a large proportion of the Penobscot Association, St. Stephen Presbyterians lacked a church building, a regular ministry, and even a formal organization during much of the first half of the century. McColl had made converts among the Scottish Loyalists, and preached in Gaelic at the new Scottish settlements in St. James from 1815 until 1821, when he rashly took issue with the Westminster Confession.¹⁶ In 1834, the Church of Scotland minister in St. Andrews estimated that in St. Stephen there were "500 Presbyterians, others who would become such under favourable circumstances".¹⁷ According to the first resident

¹⁵ SCC, 31 March 1892, p. 2 col. 3; 17 October 1895, p. 2 col. 2.

¹⁶ BNAWMM, January 1842, p. 7; SCC, 8 November 1877, p. 2 col. 2; Knowlton, p. 106; Acheson, "Denominationalism", pp. 36, 55.

¹⁷ Cited in F. E. Archibald, "History of the Presbyterian

Presbyterian minister in the parish of St. James, one of the reasons for the initially unsuccessful attempt by local adherents to build a church in St. Stephen was the refusal of the Methodists to share their chapel with the Presbyterians. He also wrote that the minister of the Church of England was "as crafty as a fox", and summarized the Methodists with scorn: "they have no learning, but they are a sly sneaking sect, and compass land and sea to make proselytes."¹⁸

The success of Methodism in securing the largest share of adherents, the persistence of the New England religious traditions, and the 'wake' of this competition for the souls of British immigrants can be seen in the ethnic and religious composition of those listed in the 1861 or 1871 census returns who had been in the parish since 1851. Of the 844 household heads within the two circuits in 1861, 368 were linked to the parish in 1851. Baptists, Congregationalists, and Universalists each made up roughly 6% of this latter group, and were almost entirely North American. Four fifths of the 112 Methodist heads and two

Church in New Brunswick from its earliest beginnings to the Union of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1784-1875", Tps., 1962, p. 61.

¹⁸ Cited in F. E. Archibald, "Contribution of the Scottish Church to New Brunswick Presbyterianism from its Earliest Beginnings until the Time of the Disruption, and Afterwards, 1784-1852", (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1932), p. 82.

thirds of the 80 Anglican heads were New Brunswick born. However, another one fourth of the Anglican heads and three fourths of the 52 Presbyterian heads were British immigrants.

Ethnicity in 1871 is a murkier reflection of the origins of religious groups. Required by the Enumerator's Manual to be self-defined, ethnicity was necessarily impressionistic for the descendants of eighteenth century settlers, as in the case of a group of Methodist families descended from the same Loyalist who appear sometimes as Dutch and sometimes as Swedish,¹⁹ and incomplete for children of immigrant mothers and North American fathers. Nevertheless, this information is useful in modifying the image of Maritime Methodism as 'English' in origin. Of the 298 Methodists over the age of 24 in St. Stephen in 1871 who were linked to the parish in 1851, only 37% described themselves as of English ethnicity. Another one third described themselves as Scottish, and this group constituted roughly one half of all those linked to the parish in 1851 who described themselves as Scottish. As Methodism was very rare in Scotland, these were probably converts or their descendants. St. Stephen was by no means representative of the Scottish/Methodist encounter in New Brunswick. T. Watson Smith attributed early Methodism's

¹⁹ William Hamilton, Genealogical Notes on the Hayman Family.

appeal to Presbyterians to "the presence of Moderatism" among the latter's churches, rather than to their limited ministry in the early decades. However, he claimed that in contrast with Methodist growth in Central Canada, comparatively fewer Scottish immigrants in the Maritimes became Methodists. This suggests that the St. Stephen experience may have been uniquely due to McColl's own appeal as a formerly Episcopalian Scottish Methodist and his establishment of Methodism first past the post.²⁰

As indicated in the previous chapter (p. 212), British immigrant Methodists formed a significant presence in St. Stephen's Methodist churches despite their small numbers, because of their greater propensity to join and stay in the church or participate in lay leadership. In 1861, roughly one third of both the 58 British immigrant Methodist adherents and of the 39 future Methodists were English (another 13 English Methodist immigrants arrived in the parish by 1871). Even as late as these decades, a few Scottish immigrants were or became Methodists. However 64, or over half of the British Methodists (41) or future Methodists (23) in either census, were Irish immigrants. Although Anglicans and Presbyterians predominated among Irish Protestant immigrants listed in 1871, among New Brunswickers reporting Irish Protestant descent, Methodists

²⁰ Hempton, p. 19; T. Watson Smith, II, pp. 131, 423.

and Anglicans each constituted roughly 30%, and Presbyterians only 18%.

The relation of Irish Protestantism to Methodist growth is complicated by the difficulty of distinguishing Irish Methodism from Methodism made up of Irish converts. In fact, this difficulty reflects the origins of Irish Methodism itself, among "Palatine settlers in the southeast, some lapsed Presbyterians and much larger number of enthusiastic Anglicans". With the evangelical revival in the Church of Ireland, its affinities with Methodism increased, and as late as the 1834 census in Ireland, "many of those who attended Methodist worship chose to be returned as members of the established church".²¹ Despite periodic revivals, the Irish Conference experienced an almost constant loss of members and adherents from emigration to the British colonies, with peak flows in the famine years around 1817 and the decade after 1845.²² The most exaggerated claim for the influence of this immigration in the Maritimes came from its nineteenth century hagiographer William Crook who described the the Eastern British America

²¹ Hempton, pp. 118-119; Desmond Bowen, The Protestant Crusade in Ireland 1800-70 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), p. 34; D. W. Miller, "Presbyterianism and 'Modernization' in Ulster", Past and Present, No. 80(1978), p. 85.

²² Norman W. Taggart, The Irish in World Methodism: 1760-1900 (London: Epworth Press, 1986), pp. 37-38.

Conference as the "offspring of Irish Methodism". Less sweepingly, T. Watson Smith stressed the role of both English and Irish immigrants in the region's Methodist growth, while the entry on the New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island Conference for the 1880 Cyclopedia of Methodism made particular but not exclusive note of the Conference's Irish background.²³

This comparative history of other Protestant churches in St. Stephen before 1851 has relied on literary sources and inferences from the ethno-religious composition of Methodism in 1861 and 1871 to establish that the inter-denominational flow of laity during the 1860s and 1870s was by no means new. However, in an age of incipient ecumenism, the denominational competition and proselytism of these latter decades may have been more implicit and less overt. According to Boardman's recollections published in 1895, during the first half of the century:

There was not the same friendly feeling between the denominations that we have today. One would not see then ministers of different denominations together in the same pulpit....Universalists, Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists, all suffered from such difficulties, for the devil rejoices when good soldiers turn their weapons against each other.²⁴

²³ Rev. William Crook, Ireland and the Centenary of American Methodism (London: Hamilton Adams & Co.; Dublin: Richard Yoakley, 1866), p. 212; T. Watson Smith, II, pp. 130-31; Mathew Simpson, Cyclopedia of Methodism (Philadelphia: H. Everts, 1880), p. 646.

Apart from an individual or family decision to vary the Sunday spiritual menu, there were other opportunities to appraise the available varieties of worship or ministerial style. The oldest and most ecumenical was the St. Stephen Bible Society. McColl had been one of the founders in 1820 of this branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and his preference for it and belief that the community could not support any others delayed support of the Methodist Missionary Society until after his death. In the 1860s and 1870s, the lay and clerical leadership of the Bible Society came from all the main Protestant denominations.²⁵ The local temperance movement has already been summarized, though its efforts were not entirely demonstrations of Christian unity. The Courier reproached the 'Evangelical Ministers Association of Calais and St. Stephen' for excluding non-evangelical clergy, and thus undermining the temperance cause. The Women's Christian Temperance Union was far more successful and enduring than either this Ministers' Association or the Young Men's Christian Association, but an account of Methodist involvement in these gender-based groups belongs in Chapter Nine of this thesis.

²⁴ SCC, 17 October 1895, p. 2 col. 2.

²⁵ Acheson, "M'Coll", p. 431; SCC, 14 February 1868, p. 2 col. 3; 28 January 1869, p. 2 cols. 1-4; 8 December 1870, p. 2 cols. 4-5; 14 January 1875, p. 2 cols. 1-3; 18 January 1877, p. 2 cols. 1-2.

More specifically evangelical opportunities included the annual union week of prayer at the beginning of January, which had been established by the Evangelical Alliance in 1861 throughout many communities in Britain and North America.²⁶ In St. Stephen, services were held alternating each day between the Methodist, Presbyterian, and, in later years, Baptist churches. These were reportedly well attended, although, like the temperance movement, not always manifestations of Christian unity. The Courier reported "gossip" about town after one meeting in 1873 at "which two prominent gentlemen saw fit to leave because of some disparaging remarks in reference to the mode in which a former meeting was conducted."²⁷ On occasion, Presbyterian and, more rarely, Baptist ministers joined in Methodist Missionary Society meetings, while Methodist clergy sometimes assisted at the Presbyterian equivalent. According to the Courier, "various denominations" were represented at a Methodist meeting held in the spring of 1872, and "reference was made to the growing spirit of unity among professing Christians, and the need that exists for still

²⁶ J. B. A. Kessler Jr., A Study of the Evangelical Alliance in Great Britain (Goes, Netherlands: Oosterbaan & LeCointre, 1968), p. 61.

²⁷ SCC, 6 January 1866, p. 2 col. 3; 11 January 1867, p. 2 col. 2; 17 January 1868, p. 2 col. 3; 5 January 1871, p. 2 col. 5; 4 January 1872, p. 2 col. 3; 16 January 1873, p. 2 col. 7; 7 January 1875, p. 2 col. 1.

greater things in this respect."²⁸

The ease with which many lay persons moved between Methodism and other denominations between 1861 and 1881 may have been further evidence of this "growing spirit of unity", at least among Protestants. Yet it might equally underscore the importance of denominational differences, in that such changes implied that denominational affiliation still mattered, even if only as a personal or social distinction among laity. For Methodists who appeared in both the 1861 and 1871 census returns, changes in an adult's response to the question on religion, even if he or she never attended church, indicate at least a shift in self-defined denominational affiliation. Some of the new adult Methodist adherents in 1871 may have become members in the 1880s, taking a longer route into the church than other converts. However, changes in nominal adherence also demonstrate that it was possible to 'convert' to Methodism, without necessarily converting to membership itself. In other words, new Methodists did not necessarily believe that they had to be church members in order to call themselves Methodist. Without information about individual motivation, one can only speculate on whether people drifted or steered into other denominations, or whether such changes meant

²⁸ SCC, 19 January 1871, p. 2 cols. 2-3; 20 January 1876, p. 2 col. 4; 18 August 1870, p. 2 col. 5; 18 April 1872, p. 2 col. 2.

rejection of the old or acceptance of the new.

The following summary tables of lay moves between denominations convey the many combinations of adherence and membership patterns that might delineate one lay person's path in or out of Methodism. Although only a minority of church members, those who still reported themselves as adherents of other denominations represent an intriguing combination of denominational affiliation and self-identification. One can only speculate as to whether they saw themselves as possessing two affiliations, or one, and if so which one? For those individuals appearing only in one census year, only converts from other denominations who became church members can be identified. Thus the flow away from Methodism is underestimated, since it is probable that some individuals appearing on census returns as Methodist adherents became members or communicants of other churches. Documenting this, however, must wait for a larger treatment of comparative church growth in St. Stephen.

In contrast with the overlapping areas of evangelical cooperation--whether hosting professional revivalists, missionary meetings, or the union week of prayer--local Methodist churches had fewer formal denominational contacts with the Church of England. Yet the greatest identifiable flow to and from Methodism in the 1860s and 1870s involved

Anglicans. For Anglicans who wanted more evangelicalism, more frequent communion than that offered by the Presbyterians, and the acceptance of infant baptism, Methodism was an obvious choice. That Methodist and Anglican clergymen were aware of this is implied by a defense of Methodism's continued existence as a denomination published in the Wesleyan in 1857. According to the writer from St. David, "It has been said to me and to the Methodists of this place, by a certain Minister of the Church of England, that the Methodists ought to return to the Church, because John Wesley never wished his followers to separate." The writer then pointed out that Wesley had separated only because the Church of England would not allow what Methodists considered the essential features of pure Christianity. Not only was this still the case, but Methodist success proved that Wesley's decision was "blessed" by God. This St. David 'Methodist'²⁹ added:

There are many evangelical ministers and many pious members of the Church who long for a reform among its ministers and people, and far be it from us to try to separate them from her communion. Nay, we would rather say to them, abide where you are and labor and pray for that reform.

²⁹ It is not clear whether the writer was a minister or a lay person.

Table 3: Ever-Methodist Anglicans**ADULTS (AGE>14 IN 1861 - AGE>24 IN 1871)****Simultaneously Anglican and Methodist****Anglicans found only in the 1861 census****1 church member 1850s and 1860s****1 officer of the Board (QOB)****Anglicans listed as such in both census records****4 officers of the Board*****See also future Methodists below)****Methodists by the Latest Record****Anglicans found only in the 1861 census****6 members during the 1860s****Anglicans found only in the 1871 census****2 members during the 1870s****Individuals appearing in 1861 and 1871**

4	Anglican	Methodist	*Member 1850s-70s
1	Anglican	Methodist	*Member 1850s-60s
11	Anglican	Methodist	Member 1860s-70s
3	Anglican	Methodist	Member 1860s
4	Anglican	Methodist	Member 1870s
1	Anglican	Anglican	Member 1870s
21	Anglican	Methodist	Adherent 1851-81
1	Anglican	Episc. Meth.	Adherent 1851-81

Former Methodists**Individuals appearing in both census returns****2 Methodist Anglican Member 1850s-60s****26 Methodist Anglican Adherent 1851-81****CHILDREN WHO BECAME CHURCH MEMBERS****14 Anglicans in the 1871 census return****4 new Methodists in the 1871 census return****2 former Methodists in the 1871 census return**

Like Taylor, he cited the Biblical injunction to the warring tribes of Israel, and concluded: "If we cannot in conscience return--let us not fall out by the way."³⁰

This dynamic between Methodism and high versus low church influences within the Church of England lay behind the flow of Anglicans and Methodists in St. Stephen to each other's churches during the 1860s. Although as the next chapter will show, changes in adherence were most often made as a family, the never-member adherents listed in the following tables include only those who were old enough to have led these changes or been free to resist them. Thus for the Anglican group, a further 36 children were new Methodists in 1871 and 20 Anglicans under the age of 24 in 1871 had been Methodists in 1861. The rebuilding of Christ Church under the design and direction of high churchman Edward Medley had ignited a conflict that culminated in the establishment of Trinity Church in 1870 by "dissidents" from Christ Church. The number of communicants at Christ Church had sunk from 90 in 1860 to 36 by 1865, suggesting that the low church supporters were the larger group.³¹ The list of male parishioners at the first meeting of the new church includes three whose siblings, spouses, or children were sometime Methodist members in the 1860s or 1870s, as well as the

³⁰ TFW, 27 August 1857, p. 2 cols. 1-2.

³¹ Acheson, "Denominationalism", p. 195; Newnham, pp. 30-31.

husband of a Baptist in 1871. Disaffected Anglicans who had joined the Methodists in the 1860s may have in turn joined this new church, which seems to have been regarded by the Methodists as a more cognate rival. The wife of one Methodist minister served as organist to the second Anglican Church while her husband was stationed in St. Stephen, and the Methodists apparently shared their building on occasion with "the ladies of Trinity Church".³²

Despite their evangelical affinities, clerical fellowship between Baptists and Methodists fell short of the communion table and was hindered by debates on infant baptism. At least two public skirmishes occurred in St. David in 1854 and 1871, and the latter involved an exchange of letters for several weeks in the Courier until the Presbyterian editor closed the debate. Within St. Stephen, lay Methodists and Baptists sampled or moved to each other's churches and coexisted within families. The denominational background of the 15 local charter members of the new Baptist church was itself diverse. They included the wife of a Methodist, the parents of adult Methodists and future Methodists, a Presbyterian, and Sarah McBean. In 1861 she was listed as a Baptist married to a Methodist, but in 1871, a year after the the opening of the new church, both she and her husband

³² SCC, 21 April 1870, p. 2 col. 3; 13 July 1876, p. 2 col. 2; 20 May 1880, p. 2 col. 4.

identified themselves as Anglicans. By July 1875, the church had roughly 100 members, having received 34 by adult baptism since 1872. On the Maine side of the river, a Free Will Baptist church had gathered at Union Mills, and experienced a small revival over 1872 and 1873. Although 120 Free Will Baptists were reported in the 1871 Canadian census, only 10 were listed in 1881.³³

As Table 4 below indicates, some of the Free Will Baptists in 1871 were former Methodists. Three members of the same family in 1861 appear to have simultaneously remained Baptists and Methodists. Since they included two old and active Methodists, Phebe Tobin (a minister's daughter) and Mary (Mrs. Abner) Hill, this listing may be due to enumerator error. Tobin's son and Hill's daughter (the other church member) had been married in the Methodist church, and some of their other relations in the 1861 census were Methodists, but one adult daughter's family were Anglican in 1861, though turning or returning to Methodism by 1871. Yet since neither of their neighbours were listed as Baptists, it is difficult to see why they would have been mistakenly recorded as such.³⁴ Although some Baptist families appear to have become Methodists, the figures for

³³ Martin, pp. 2-6; Knowlton, p. 118.

³⁴ Tobin family history; MTMR; Marriage Records, Milltown circuit.

Table 4: Ever-Methodist Baptists

ADULTS (AGE>14 IN 1861 - AGE>24 IN 1871)

Simultaneously Baptist and Methodist

Baptists found only in the 1861 census

2 members 1850s and 1860s*

Baptists listed as such in both census records

1 member 1850s-70s

*See also future Methodists below)

Methodists by the Latest Record

Baptists found only in the 1861 census

1 member during the 1860s and 1870s

1 member during the 1860s

Baptists found only in the 1871 census

2 members during the 1870s

Individuals appearing in both census returns

1	Baptist	Methodist	*Member 1850s-70s
1	Baptist	Methodist	*Member 1850s
4	Baptist	Methodist	Member 1860s-70s
9	Baptist	Methodist	Member 1870s
2	Baptist	Baptist	Member 1870s
2	Presbyterian	Baptist	Member 1870s
1	Methodist	F.C.Baptist	Member 1870s
18	Baptist	Methodist	Adherent 1851-81

Former Methodists

Baptists found only in the 1861 census

1 member during the 1850s

Individuals appearing in both census records

1	Baptist	Baptist	Member 1860s
1	Methodist	Baptist	Member 1860s
1	Methodist	Baptist	Member 1850s-60s
8	Methodist	Baptist	Adherent 1851-81
2	Methodist	F.C.Baptist	Adherent 1851-81

CHILDREN WHO BECAME CHURCH MEMBERS

3 Baptists in the 1871 census return

8 new Methodists in the 1871 census return

Table 5: Ever-Methodist Presbyterians**SIMULTANEOUSLY PRESBYTERIAN AND METHODIST**

Church of Scotland found only in the 1861 census

1 member 1850s and 1860s

Church of Scotland found only in the 1871 census

1 member 1860s and 1870s

Presb. Ch. of L.P. found only in the 1871 census

2 member 1860s and 1870s

Presbyterians listed as such in both census records

1 Church of Scotland in 1871 member 1860s-70s

2 Church of L.P. in 1871 member 1860s-70s

*(See also future Methodists below)

METHODISTS BY THE LATEST RECORD

Presbyterians found only in the 1861 census

1 member during the 1860s

Presb. Ch. of L.P. found only in the 1871 census

4 members during the 1870s

Church of Scotland found only in the 1871 census

3 member during the 1870s

Individuals appearing in both census returns

1	Presbyterian	Methodist	*Member 1850s-70s
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1	Presbyterian	Methodist	*Member 1850s-60s
---	--------------	-----------	-------------------

1	Presbyterian	Methodist	*Member 1850s
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2	Presbyterian	Methodist	Member 1860s-70s
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5	Presbyterian	Methodist	Member 1870s
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4	Presbyterian	Ch. of L.P.	Member 1870s
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2	Methodist	Ch. of Scotland	Member 1870s
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1	Anglican	Ch. of L.P.	Member 1870s
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8	Presbyterian	Methodist	Adherent 1851-81
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FORMER METHODISTS

Presbyterians found only in the 1861 census

3 members during the 1850s

Individuals appearing in both census records

1	Presbyterian	Ch. of L.P.	Member 1850s-60s
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1	Presbyterian	Ch. of L.P.	Member 1860s
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3	Methodist	Ch. of L.P.	Adherent 1851-81
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4	Methodist	Ch. of Scotland	Adherent 1851-81
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CHILDREN WHO BECAME CHURCH MEMBERS

3 new Methodists in 1871

4 Church of Scotland in 1871(1 formerly Methodist)

6 Ch. of L.P. in 1871

never-member adherent children suggest that fewer whole Methodist families became Baptists: 19 children in 1871 were new Methodists, but only eight Baptists were former Methodists.

The Presbyterians were the next largest denominational source of gain and loss to the Methodists. Having built a church in 1850, the former acquired a resident minister when they became part of the Free Church Synod of New Brunswick in 1854. However, they were not regularly supplied until 1872, depending often on visiting ministers and the lay leadership. Like the Anglicans, they also experienced controversy in this decade, resisting denominational authority by defending the use of organ music in their services. The 1871 census identified two other kinds of Presbyterians apart from adherents of the Church of the Lower Provinces (to which the church in St. Stephen belonged): adherents of the Church of Scotland, and Reformed Presbyterians. The former were the largest such group in the county, and were twice as large as the group in St. Andrews, the nearest organized congregation. Some of these individuals, such as James G. Stevens, a prominent layman in the St. Stephen church, must have reported the denomination they were baptized into, while the Reformed Presbyterians, who appear to have had little or no part in

the Reformed Presbyterian Church elsewhere in the province, must have chosen to cite their ethno-religious origin among Irish Presbyterian descendants of the Covenanters. As Table 5³⁵ above indicates, none of the Reformed and only a few Church of Scotland adherents were among those adult Presbyterians who became Methodists during the 1860s and 1870s. Moreover, those 1861 Methodists who appeared as Church of Scotland adherents in 1871 were probably returning to the Presbyterian fold. However, they appear to have brought no children with them, since all 14 of the nonmember ever-Methodist Presbyterian children were new Methodists in 1871.

Given the origins of the Milltown Congregationalists and, to a lesser extent, the Universalists among the schismatic Methodists of the 1840s, the transfers among these churches listed in Table 6 below are not surprising. In fact, James Taylor's report on the circuit in 1874 implied that even Methodists who had only just arrived in Milltown sometimes joined the Congregationalists because they found that "the other church has the prestige of social position, wealth and show". More explicitly, he described the social "ban" as "comprised in these words: If you attend the Methodist Church you must not expect to move in our circle".³⁶

³⁵ As with previous tables, this refers to adults who were over the age of 14 in 1861 or over the age of 24 in 1871.

Nevertheless, some families left the Congregationalists for the Methodists: although five never-member Methodist children in 1861 had become Congregationalists or Universalists by 1871, ten of the latter in 1861 had become Methodists by 1871. An 1878 editorial in the Wesleyan rejoiced that in the northeast the evangelical churches were thriving, while churches of "prestige, fashion, wealth and education" were declining. It concluded that the attempt to introduce "so-called advanced religion into the Maritime Provinces had failed". In this context, one can fully appreciate the humorous tribute to Christian unity noted by the Courier's Presbyterian editor at the sight of "a good Methodist parson and a Universalist minister crossing the ice together", arm in arm: "To look at them one would think they never denounced each other's religious systems in their respective pulpits, or cautioned their flocks against the insidious evils of the other's teachings."³⁷

The small group of Adventists in St. Stephens were all, by definition, earlier or recent converts from other denominations. The Adventists made little progress within the parish, growing from 44 individuals in 1871 to 59 in 1881, concentrated in Milltown and Upper Mills. In 1871,

³⁶ TPW, 20 April 1874, p. 2 cols. 4-5.

³⁷ TPW, 27 April 1878, p. 4 cols. 1-2; SCC, 16 February 1871, p. 2 col. 3.

Table 6: Ever-Methodist Congregationalists or Universalists

ADULTS (AGE>14 IN 1861 - AGE>24 IN 1871)

Methodists by the Latest Record

**Congregationalists found only in the 1871 census
1 member during the 1870s**

Individuals appearing in both census returns

1 Congreg.	Methodist	Member 1860s-70s
5 Congreg.	Methodist	Member 1870s
3 Universalist	Methodist	Adherent 1851-81
4 Congreg.	Methodist	Adherent 1851-81

Former Methodists

**Congregationalists found only in the 1861 census
1 member during the 1850s**

Individuals appearing in both census records

1 Congreg.	Congreg.	Member 1850s
1 Methodist	Universalist	Member 1850s
1 Presbyterian	Congreg.	Member 1860s
4 Methodist	Universalist	Adherent 1851-81
2 Methodist	Congreg.	Adherent 1851-81

CHILDREN WHO BECAME CHURCH MEMBERS

1 former Methodist, a Universalist in 1871
2 Universalists in 1861 and 1871
2 former Congregationalists, Methodists in 1871

five adult Adventists were, in fact, former Methodists, and another adult (and his daughter), who appeared only in the 1871 census, became Methodist church members in the 1870s. Accurately describing millenarianism among these few

families is impossible, but one can speculate on its nature from other sources. According to the Courier, Adventist preachers had set up a tent in Milltown, Maine in September 1868, and held meetings for two or three weeks. Although reportedly not immersing more than ten individuals, they did succeed in organizing a society, purchasing a hall, and obtaining a regular clergyman. This group was probably part of the post-Civil War apocalyptic strain of American Adventism. The period 1867 to 1870 was one of the peaks in British and American millenarianism, and a disparaging comment by the Courier suggests that local Adventists expected the "general bust-up" in 1870.³⁸

Five Methodists from two of Milltown's socially elite families³⁹ reported themselves as Swedenborgians in 1871. This was not so far a stretch as it seems, for there were affinities of devotional and organizational style, with a precedent in the way early English Swedenborgianism drew upon various strains of Methodism.⁴⁰ Even a few Catholic families in the parish included Methodists in the 1860s and

³⁸ SCC, 10 September 1868, p. 2 col. 2; 10 October 1868, p. 2 cols. 3-4; Knowlton, pp. 118-19; Jonathan M. Butler, "Adventism and the American Experience", in The Rise of Adventism: Religion and Society in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 174.

³⁹ The Abner Hills and the Uptons.

⁴⁰ W. R. Ward, "Swedenborgianism: Heresy, Schism or Religious protest?", Studies in Church History 9(1972), pp. 303-09.

1870s: one Catholic woman became a Methodist adherent by 1871 and a member in the 1870s, and four Catholic children in 1861 appeared as Methodists in 1871. Although three of these children simply took their now widowed father's affiliation, one was still living within his Catholic family. Finally, with seemingly providential mathematical harmony, one Methodist in 1861 responded "no religion" in 1871, and another who responded "nothing" in 1861 became a Methodist.

The significance of this inter-denominational flow within Methodism can be measured in various ways. In 1861, 68 or 16% of the 434 Methodists adherents over 14 linked to the following census ceased to be Methodist adherents by 1871 (though, as the preceding tables have shown, some later returned to the fold via the membership). In 1871, 111--or 23%--of Methodists over 24 in 1871 who had been listed in the 1861 census were converts from other denominations. In all, of the 545 sometime Methodist adherents in this age group in both returns, roughly one third had changed their nominal adherence during the previous decade. Continuing and lapsed Methodists in this group were more likely to have been in the parish since 1851: whereas two thirds of the former and 60% of the latter could be linked to the parish in 1851, 60% of the new Methodists were newcomers, of whom

one fourth were British immigrants. It is tempting to wonder if geographic mobility loosened denominational ties or at least encouraged individuals to rethink or reestablish them on a new footing, but without a sense of what proportion these converts formed among all newcomers in other religious groups, this must remain speculation. These changes in nominal adherence were not an exclusively Methodist phenomenon, but since Methodism was the largest group, they probably encompassed the largest number of such changes. Among the 710 household heads in either 1861 or 1871 who were linked to both census returns, roughly one fifth had changed their adherence: 11% to or from Methodism, 8% involving other denominations.

Among sometime church members, 577 could be linked to one or more census returns, of whom 28% either came from or left for other denominations. Almost all of these were adherents of other denominations who joined the church: of the 159, only 11 had been Methodist adherents in 1861 and adherents of other denominations in 1871; the remainder were either new Methodist adherents, or adherents of other denominations who appeared only in one census. Some historians have hypothesized that members recruited from the internal constituency of a voluntarist church should be more likely to remain within the church than those who were converts

from other denominations.⁴¹ Because of the generally high turnover among the membership, the problem of unexplained exits, and the difficulty of meaningfully relating the beginning or end of a person's membership with their adherence on the closest census return, analyzing this question for St. Stephen Methodists was very difficult. Simply conflating all types of exits excluding deaths for the 240 members who had joined in the 1850s or 1860s and were listed in the 1861 census showed that adherents tended to remain members longer than converts: only 15% of those who were Methodist adherents in 1861 were gone within two years, and 44% remained 13 years or more, whereas 31% of converts were gone within two years and only 27% remained 13 years or more. However, among members with a known exit, converts were not overrepresented among either those who ceased their membership or left the parish, suggesting that while adherents might stay the course somewhat longer than converts, they ultimately left the class meeting in the same proportion as converts. Given their greater propensity to leave the membership within a few years, it is not surprising that converts made up only 15% of the 69 members of the the Quarterly Official Boards of the two circuits between 1861 and 1881 who were linked to the 1861 or 1871 census.⁴² These included three class leaders, several new

⁴¹ Currie et al., p. 80.

Methodist stewards or trustees, and, as mentioned in Chapter Three (p. 116), the five Anglicans at Old Ridge.

The church at Old Ridge illustrates both Methodism's success in recruiting from other denominations and its limits in the face of lay independence. Not only did the majority of Old Ridge trustees still call themselves Anglicans in 1861 or 1871, but only half of the pew holding families linked to the 1861 census return were entirely Methodist. The rest were Anglicans, Baptists, or Presbyterians, and many of these families kept their nominal adherence distinct even in 1871.⁴³ Among the 139 sometime Methodist adherents over the age of 14 in 1861 or 24 in 1871 linked to both returns at Old Ridge, 8% were new Methodists by 1871, and 9% former Methodists. Given the independence of the Old Ridge nonMethodists and the location of three nonMethodist churches in the village of St. Stephen, it is not surprising that of all church members linked to either census return, those in the St. Stephen circuit class meetings had the lowest proportion of converts, roughly

⁴² As is the case with all Methodists who were listed in only 1861 or 1871, it is possible that they included converts or those who would have joined other denominations had they resided in the parish longer.

⁴³ Of the 40 pew renters linked to the 1861 census return, 19 were rented in the names of nonMethodists; one of these would become a Methodist by 1871, and two had Methodist wives or children.

between a tenth and a fifth.⁴⁴ In the village of St. Stephen itself, 16% of the 146 sometime adult Methodist adherents were new Methodists in 1871, but 12% had moved to other denominations. Given the establishment of two new churches in the 1860s, some of those who left Methodism may have been former converts returning to their previous adherence.

Roughly a fourth of the church members in the Union Mills or Milltown class meetings who could be linked to the 1861 or 1871 census but only a fifth of those in the Getchell/Barter Settlement group were converts. However, half of the 31 members in the Mohannas group and 61% of the 69 members at Upper Mills were converts. Similarly, although denominational shifts in adherence were almost even in Getchell and Barter Settlements, where 12% of the 51 sometime adult adherents were no longer Methodists in 1871 matched by 10% who were new Methodists, Methodist adherents in the small villages and Mohannas included higher proportions of converts. At Union Mills, 12% of the 60 sometime Methodist adherents were no longer Methodists by 1871, but another one fourth were new Methodists. At Upper Mills during the 1860s, Methodism offered the only church on either side of side of the river. A list of financial supporters for the year 1863/64 shows that almost half never

⁴⁴ This is based on the 577 church members linked to a census return divided into Society groups according to where they began their membership.

appeared on either Canadian census; of the 13 who did in 1861, nine were adherents of other denominations. Of the 50 adult sometime Methodist adherents in Upper Mills listed in either Canadian census, 70% were new Methodists in 1871 and only 8% former Methodists. By 1870, a small Baptist church had been established on the American side, and on at least one occasion the Baptist and Methodist Sunday schools combined with the temperance lodge for joint festivities.⁴⁵ New and former Methodists among the tiny group of adult sometime adherents in Mohannas canceled each other out in terms of church growth: of 32, seven were new Methodists and eight had ceased to be Methodists. Perhaps because that portion of Milltown Methodists inclined to move to other denominations had already done so by 1861, only four of the 57 sometime adult adherents in this group were no longer Methodists by 1871, and one third were new Methodists. Pew records for the Milltown church between 1858 and 1864 suggest that roughly one third of renting families linked to census returns were either partly or entirely adherents of other denominations in 1861.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ TPW, 8 November 1867, p. 2 col. 4; 17 June 1869, p. 2 col. 4; 16 March 1871, p. 2 col. 2; 29 September 1870, p. 2 col. 7.

⁴⁶ Of 42 families linked to the 1861 census return, 13 were not Methodist in 1861 (of whom seven would become Methodists by 1871), three were partly Methodist, and 32 were Methodist (of whom one would become Anglican by 1871).

One can only tentatively generalize about the effect of Methodism's multi-denominational background on the nature of church life itself. This phenomenon was not exclusively Canadian, since British Methodist congregations had always included those whom contemporary clergy recognized as "borderers".⁴⁷ Yet although immigrants to the Maritimes probably included all the strains of divided English Methodism, they managed to coexist in one regional conference, and in Canada would reunite much sooner than in England. According to T. Watson Smith, through converted Anglicans and Presbyterians, "the Methodists received for some years an accession of members whose early religious training was well calculated to counteract any serious tendencies towards indulgence in extravagances of 'New Light' origin". He argued that the Presbyterians made a further contribution: strengthening the resistance to Anglican tendencies, they "brought with them as a result of their early training a measure of that spirit of civil and religious independence for which Presbyterianism has always been distinguished."⁴⁸ Even more intriguing is the possibility that the growth of Methodism through converts from other denominations anticipated and strengthened the church union movement. It would be extremely difficult if

⁴⁷ Luker, p. 615.

⁴⁸ T. Watson Smith, II, pp. 348, 423.

not impossible to test a further hypothesis that the cost of such conversions may have been the dilution of denominational identity, and the loss of such distinctively Methodist institutions as the covenant service or the class meeting. Although no longer compulsory, or in the case of the class meeting wide spread, these institutions are still a part of British and American Methodism. George O. Huestis concluded more positively: Methodism "as a religious organization embracing theological opinions and disciplinary regulations", was "eclectic; having gathered largely from other denominations".⁴⁹

As this chapter and that preceding it have shown, the dynamics of church growth were intricate. Methodists demonstrated considerable variety in the type of church involvement they left recorded for historians. Although this variety at first seems so idiosyncratic as to defy interpretation, it is this very feature that unites the data. Had church membership been solely a matter of social expectations or the sway of a charismatic revivalist or a psychological response to economic insecurity, the rate of 'sometime' or current church membership would have been higher or more consistent over time and place. Moreover, if churches had depended on social expectations or economic insecurity as forces that encouraged church membership, they

⁴⁹ TPW, 1 February 1879, p. 6 cols. 1-2.

would have retained their members for longer. Similarly, had denominational affiliation been solely a matter of inherited ethnicity or local attachments, one might have expected, for example, greater resistance to Methodism in Upper Mills, or at Old Ridge more conversions to Methodism. As these two examples suggest, one cannot argue that inherited identity or local attachments were never factors in church involvement, or, in the case of Methodists and Congregationalists in Milltown, that economic context never influenced individual choice. Rather, the power of these influences varied sufficiently within the parish and over the two decades so as to suggest that individuals still possessed enough autonomy as religious consumers to make and unmake religious choices. As part three of this thesis will show, this variety of involvement was evident even within the smallest social unit of Methodism, the family itself.

Chapter VII

The Demography of Church Growth (1): Family

The previous chapters have shown how Methodism fared in gaining adherents and members from the wider community, whether through transience, revivalism, or proselytism. But within evangelical ideology, the priorities of church growth were reversed. Clerical writers urged "every professor, every member of our societies" to use "his or her individual influence for the salvation of our families, our congregations, and the world", to "become evangelists first to our own families; then to our neighbors".¹ The imagery for family prayer was even liturgical, reflecting the way Methodism sacralized domestic space, not just metaphorically but also literally, holding services outside towns in homes. As McKeown reported of the 1861 Old Ridge revival: "A good proportion of those blessed were heads of families, who left the house of God promising they would at once erect the family altar, and from henceforth offer God the morning and evening sacrifice." After seven weeks of revival in neighbouring St. David, another minister wrote that "several

¹ TPW, 20 November 1872, p. 4 col. 3; 5 August 1881, p. 5 col. 3.

heads of families and husbands and wives are among the converted...who serve the Lord with their houses, and thus increase the number of praying families".² Most St. Stephen references to concerns for the conversion of family members come from the deathbeds of the particularly devout; their citation is therefore deferred to the last chapter.

However, one Old Ridge class leader reputedly expressed this desire throughout his life: William Mitchell, whose children and grandchildren were members or adherents during the 1860s and 1870s, "longed to see the work of God revive among those by whom he was surrounded, and particularly among such as were near unto him by the ties of nature".³

Although the importance of the family in the maintenance of religious tradition is a cross-cultural phenomenon,⁴ the relationship between this function and growth of religious groups is obviously varied. The application of the concept of "tribalism" to voluntarist church growth, which originated in studies of New England Puritanism, exemplifies this. A "common cultural process" among widely varying religious groups, tribalism can mean different things.⁵ If

² Wilson, Never Give Up, pp. 70-71, 144; TPW, 26 December 1860, p. 2 col. 4; 7 April 1859, p. 2 cols. 3-4.

³ TPW, 15 February 1855, p. 2 cols. 4-6.

⁴ Sheva Medjuck, "Family and Household Composition in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of Moncton, N. B., 1851 to 1871", Canadian Journal of Sociology, (1979), p. 276.

tribalism is the focused recruitment of the families of existing members or supporters of a religious group, then tribalism is a constant and necessary part of any church's growth. Its historical importance then depends on its significance in relation to other components of church growth and on its ideological origins. If churches move from an expansive to a "recessive" stage of growth, where recruitment from their external constituencies is less pronounced than before, then the necessity of recruiting among their own becomes more important.⁶ In a sectarian church, tribalism implies recruitment among the families of members to the exclusion of those who do not 'fit' the sect. But in a church which maintains an expansive ideology after entering a slower stage of growth, tribalism by choice can become tribalism by necessity.

To return this theoretical discussion to Methodism, what historians have seen as a decline in enthusiasm in late nineteenth century churches was more than just the changing content of piety, but the move between these two stages of church growth. The historiography of Canadian Methodism has not made this point as explicitly as its British counterpart,⁷ but has implied it in its interpretation of

⁵ Gerald F. Moran and Maris A. Vinovskis, "The Puritan Family and Religion: A Critical Appraisal", William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series XXXIX (1982), pp. 34-38.

⁶ Currie et al., pp. 55, 73.

late nineteenth century enthusiasm. In this interpretation, revivalism became "intended for people who were already Methodists rather than the people who might become Methodists", and "the young became the accepted and predominant source of new members".⁸ However, these are assumptions based on the increasing concern with youth within evangelical print culture, which, as the next chapter will argue, is open to varying interpretation. Moreover, despite the numerous studies of eighteenth century North American churches, we know very little about the actual demography of nineteenth century churches, particularly after the Second Great Awakening.

The previous chapter has shown that St. Stephen's Methodist churches were made up not just of third or fourth generation Methodists, but also of converts, who, if no longer the 'unchurched' in terms of nominal adherence, were certainly re-churched.⁹ Yet because of out-migration and declension, the presence of new Methodists was not enough to

⁷ Currie et al., op. cit.; Walker, p. 275; Olbekevich, p. 242; Carwardine, pp. 192-97.

⁸ Westfall, p. 72; Semple, "Ontario's Religious Hegemony", pp. 30-31 and "Quest for the Kingdom", p. 112.

⁹ In fact, since the cited examples of early nineteenth century communities with significant portions of settlers reporting themselves as having no denominational commitment come from Central Canada, one cannot necessarily assume that this phenomenon also occurred in the Maritimes.

sustain local church growth, and the departure of former Methodists to other denominations only added to the urgency of gathering and keeping families within Methodism. Moreover, some clerical writers recognized the problem of church growth as demographic: it was "a matter of ever-deepening concern that so few young people" and "so few men" joined the church.¹⁰

Part three of this thesis relates what clergy wrote about families and Methodism to the demography of Methodist growth in St. Stephen. This chapter contrasts the clerical ideal of familial church involvement with the diversity of patterns of adherence and membership within local households. Although the process of Methodist growth was tribalistic, with adherents or members joining or following their relations into Methodist churches, the narrow extent of this process within Methodist families weakened the force of tribalism. Furthermore, the diversity of these patterns demonstrates the limits of evangelical ideology in influencing familial and thus individual religious choices. The two chapters that follow elaborate this theme, by examining those special clerical concerns about the demography of church growth: youth and gender.

¹⁰ TPW, 28 July 1881, p. 5 cols. 2-3; 22 November 1865, p. 2 col. 2.

In size and structure, St. Stephen's households resembled those in other Canadian communities, fitting the national pattern in 1871 of predominantly nuclear and relatively large households with an average size of 5.9.¹¹ In 1861, the average size of the 844 household within the two circuits was 5.6; two thirds contained between four and six members. In 1871, the average household size was 5.4, and 55% of 1,128 households contained between three and seven members. Although the average size of households headed by Methodists was also 5.4, households headed by Presbyterians and Catholics and households along the Valley, Old Ridge, and Back Roads or in Mohannas tended to be larger. These averages paralleled those of two comparable New Brunswick parishes. Although the average household size in St. Stephen in 1861 was higher than in St. Andrews, the 1871 averages were identical; the St. Stephen 1861 average matches that of Moncton, but the 1871 figure is lower than Moncton's 1871 average of 6.1.¹² For 257 St. Stephen mothers within the

¹¹ A. Gordon Darroch and Michael Ornstein, "Family and Household in Nineteenth-Century Canada: Regional Patterns and Regional Economies", Journal of Family History, (1984), p. 163.

¹² Peter McGahan, "Demographic and Household Structure of St. Andrews, 1831-1871", in Family and Household in Mid-Nineteenth Century New Brunswick ed. F. K. Donnelly, Social Science Monograph Series, Vol. 6, (Saint John, N. B.: University of New Brunswick, 1986), p. 62; F. K. Donnelly, "Family and Household in Rural New Brunswick", p. 92; Medjuck, "Family and Household Composition", p. 280.

two circuits in 1871 aged 25-34, 164 aged 35-44, and 49 aged 45-54, the average numbers of children under 18 listed after them on census returns were respectively 3.1, 3.5, and 1.5.¹³ These results are similar to those found in Moncton and two Ontario townships.¹⁴ At 3.4, 3.7, and 1.5., the comparable means for 159 Methodist adherent mothers in St. Stephen in these age groups were higher, showing how the religious decisions of adults brought such a large share of the whole population within the Methodist field, if not necessarily the Methodist fold.

Household structure in St. Stephen also paralleled patterns in other New Brunswick parishes.¹⁵ In both 1861 and 1871, 80% of households within the two circuits were headed by married couples, and 13% by women. Most St. Stephen households were nuclear, but a more detailed analysis of household structure can be undertaken for 1861 households within the two circuits in which the head or a family member

¹³ Because of the method used to calculate these means, the figures may be slightly inflated by the inclusion of a few servants under 18, from the 84 households within the two circuits who kept servants. The method does distinguish the children of two different mothers in the same household.

¹⁴ Medjuck, "Women's Response to Economic and Social Change in Nineteenth Century Moncton Parish, 1851-1871", Atlantis, II(1), Fall 1983, p. 26; Chad Gaffield, "Canadian Families in Cultural Context", Historical Papers, (1979), p. 61.

¹⁵ Donnelly, "Family and Household in Rural New Brunswick", p. 100.

was a present or future Methodist adherent, church member, or Board officer. Of these 313, eight were nonfamily households, 297 were headed by married couples or consisted primarily of one or both parents with young or adult children and their spouses,¹⁶ and eight consisted of other family groupings.¹⁷ Of these 297 families, 41 or 14% included relatives other than the parents or children of the household head or his wife. Of course many Methodist members and adherents occupied different family positions over this period. Of the 661 Methodists or their relations (in the 313 ever 'Methodist' households in 1861) who were over 14 in 1861 or 24 in 1871, 41% of the 113 'sons' in 1861 and one third of the daughters were married and heading a separate household by 1871. All but seven of the 185 male household heads in 1861 remained so in 1871, but 12% of wives--most widowed--became household heads or lived as extended kin in 1871. Fifteen of the 21 married Methodists living with parents or siblings in 1861 who were linked to the 1871 census had set up their own households by that year.

¹⁶ 28 were headed only by married couples.

¹⁷ I have followed Darroch and Ornstein's classification here and classified families with servants or boarders according to the family grouping. Nonfamily households consist of a Methodist head with no relations.

Methodological differences prevent full comparison with Darroch and Ornstein's work which indicates that New Brunswick in 1871 had a somewhat higher proportion of other kinds of households than other provinces. Analyzing the exceptional households in St. Stephen in 1871 shows that one fifth of the 1,128 contained individuals--either in-laws or boarders--with last names different from those of the household heads. Relatives with the same last name as the household head (who were clearly not children of the head or wife) lived in at least 84 or 7% of all households. If some individuals were incorrectly classified as sons or daughters, this group of relatives may have been larger. This proportion is lower than the comparable figures of 12.6% in Darroch and Ornstein's national sample and 10.4% for rural New Brunswick, but just above their finding of 6.7% for urban New Brunswick. In 1871, 51, or 5%, of St. Stephen households included married or widowed 'same last name' relatives of the head, and 66, or 6%, included married or widowed in-laws or boarders.

Perhaps because they were the longest settled religious group, Methodist adherents were slightly more likely to live as part of a nonnuclear family. Although they constituted 26% of all individuals over 14 in 1871 within the two circuits, they included 38% of 'same last name' married or

widowed relatives, and 32% of 'different last name' residents. In almost half of the 59 households with married or widowed relatives of the household head, these relatives were Methodists; in 39% of households with a relative of any kind, these relatives were Methodist. Since the majority of households were nuclear, one cannot readily link this pattern to a family culture of Methodism, particularly since larger and more complicated one surname households were more frequent in rural New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and the rural settlements of the parish were chiefly Methodist (and Anglican).¹⁸

Within-household differences in adherence make defining a 'Methodist' household intricate. Of 844 households in 1861 clearly within the two circuits, 221, or 26%, contained household heads, family members, or members of a boarding family who were Methodist adherents in 1861, but 12% of these families were divided in adherence. In another 17 households, servants or single boarders were the only Methodist adherents, four contained both servants or boarders who were adherents in 1861 and families who

¹⁸ To get comparable figures, I added the categories of "Some persons with same surname", "Stemlike family", and "other one-surname families", from Darroch and Ornstein's Table 1 of the national sample, but only the latter two categories from their provincial table, because they subsumed the first into non-family; Darroch and Ornstein, "Family and Household in Nineteenth-Century Canada", pp. 164-66.

included a future Methodist, and a further 43 contained sometime church members or Board officials during the 1850s and 1860s but no adherents.¹⁹ Similarly, of 1,128 households within the two circuits in 1871, the household head, at least one of his or her relations, or a member of a boarding family was a Methodist adherent in 344, or 30%; of these households, 21% were divided in adherence.²⁰ This increase may reflect the growth of both Methodism and its rivals, but also more careful enumeration. In 28 households in 1871, servants, boarders, or in-laws were the only Methodist adherents, but seven of these households also included nonadherent families with former or future Methodists. A further 36 contained only church members or Board officials from the 1860s or 1870s.²¹

¹⁹ In 1861, another 24 families contained future church members in the 1870s, and another 21 families contained future adherents.

²⁰ Most of the six boarding Methodist families in 1871 were in fact in-laws. In 1861, there were no Methodist boarding families within the two circuits who were not related to the household head. Since the 1861 figures also reflect denominational variation between a family and one extra in-law, which the 1871 do not, the 1871 proportion might be higher, as some of these families appear in both census returns.

²¹ In 1871 another three households included former church members from the 1850s; another 24 included former Methodist adherents.

Although the most immediate setting for the family dynamics of religion was thus within nuclear families, the process of Methodist growth in the 1860s and 1870s depended on the recruitment of family members from both households and larger kin groups. Most changes in nominal adherence between 1861 and 1871 were made by entire families, mainly, but not always, undertaken by parents on behalf of their children. Of 301 Methodists living in families within the two circuits who were present in both census returns but with different adherences, 198, or roughly two thirds, changed along with two or more members of their 1861 household, and a further 54 or 18% with one other household member. Moreover, of the remaining 49, most were still acting in concert with family or household dynamics: 15 took on the adherence of their new spouse in 1871, one boarder and seven 'mavericks' in 1861 united in adherence with the families they lived with in 1871, two now lived with relations of the same adherence not present in 1861, and seven, while unique in their past or future association with Methodism, lived with at least one relation whose also changed adherence involved other denominations in both years.

Looking at relations living in separate households in 1861 or 1871 but belonging to the same family in 1851

provides further evidence of both the relation of changes in adherence to family situation and differences in adherence within families. In at least 34 family groups, mainly from St. Stephen but a few from other Charlotte parishes, most variation consisted of one member now united in adherence with his or her spouse. It is also probable that some of the denominationally united families in 1861 or sole representatives of their families from other parishes were converts from other denominations. Ann and Rosanna McCloskey, two sisters from an Irish Presbyterian family in St. Patrick, married and moved to St. Stephen where they were listed as Methodist adherents. The older had married into a Methodist family, a number of whom, including her husband, were briefly church members. The younger married a Presbyterian, but then joined the Methodist church. Francis Alger's 1851 family in St. Andrews appeared as Anglicans in that parish's 1861 census, but by that year Alger, then aged 20, was apprenticed to a Methodist family and listed as a Methodist himself. He married a Presbyterian; by 1871 she too had become a Methodist, and both joined the church in the 1870s.²²

²² This and other individual or family profiles in the following chapters are drawn from the data base described in Chapter One, supplemented by information from Charlotte County Marriage records, 'vital statistics' from the Courier, and transcriptions of the St. Patrick and St. Andrews 1861 census returns generously shared by Gail Campbell.

Those new or ex-Methodists who appear to have changed their adherence at marriage show how most individuals are involved in more than one family, at the very least the families of their origin, but also their spouses' families of origin, and the families they form. Tamara Hareven has shown that such extended kin networks performed an important economic role, and suggested that historians look for "a more dynamic pattern of kin interaction" in other social groupings.²³ The following description of such networks within the church membership is based on the data base described in Chapter One. Necessarily tentative and reliant on uneven records, this description in some ways underestimates kinship, but includes a few 'residential' relationships, where apprentices, servants, or boarders joined the church along with family members. Following the methodology of Ryan's Utica study, this analysis grouped by surname individuals not linked to any other record, unless their years of membership were far apart. Although the resulting patterns may not be unique to Methodism, since it is possible that other social groups in St. Stephen could be similarly organized, they demonstrate that the process of membership growth also depended on the recruitment of family members.

²³ Hareven, "Introduction: The Historical Study of the Life Course", p. 6; Hareven, "Family History at the Crossroads", Journal of Family History, 12(1987), p. xii.

Of 789 Methodist members at any time between 1860 and 1881, 17 were from the ministers' own families. Of the remaining 772, 247, or 32%, were associated by family, household, or surname to at least five other members. A further 239, or 31%, were so associated with between with between two and four other members, and 126, or 16%, were related to only one other member. Only 160, or one fifth, appear to be the sole representatives of their families. A more precise way of showing how families directly recruited new members is to look at those who joined the church within the same year, from which, given that most members joined in revivals at special services for new members, it is legitimate to assume that they joined at the same time. Of the 612 church members in family groupings, 552 were new members since 1851. Almost two thirds (348), joined in the same year, and outside the villages in the same class meeting as one or more members of their kin group: 59% joined the same year as one other relation, 22% with two, and the remainder with three or more. Although the larger family groupings of members who joined at different times included more extended family relations, most of those who joined the same year as another relation where the relationship was known were accompanied by their spouses, children, parents, or siblings. For these individuals,

becoming a church member was clearly linked to family relationships and part of their family experience.

Although there are few comparable studies, this pattern was not unique to St. Stephen. One study of early Connecticut churches found that most seventeenth century church members followed relations, and that the joint admission of couples and siblings became increasingly common. During early nineteenth century revivals in Utica, New York, "from 17% to 54% of the converts apparently professed their faith in the company of relatives". Differences between kin networks in the villages and in the rural settlements in St. Stephen may parallel the conclusion of a study of Welsh Methodism that rural revivals were more tribalistic than town revivals. Of the 789 members between 1860 and 1881, four fifths began in village class meetings: 90% of the 160 'sole' representatives of their families joined in the villages, and 76% of those in family groupings. Of new members who joined with or followed another relation, almost half of the 467 in village class meetings joined or were joined by only one or two relations, whereas 85% of the 145 rural members joined with or were joined by three or more relations. However, quite apart from the greater transience of the villages, these patterns may simply be the result of the sources used, which tended to

favour old families with rural roots.²⁴

Summarizing the relationships within these family groupings requires some anticipation of the following chapters. Since most Methodist members in the 1860s and 1870s were married,²⁵ most parents joined before their children. But in at least 27 family groups, one or both parents joined with their usually adult children, and sometimes the latter's spouses. Most of these families lived in the same household in census years, but a few did not. One father and his married daughter lived in separate households in 1871, and joined the church in the 1878 revival; another mother, son, and daughter-in-law joined the church in the 1864 revival in the same year as the son's marriage. In 10 of these 27 family groups, the father joined the same year as one or more of his children-- these 10 included one widower and four husbands following their wives into the church. Similarly, in at least 29 groupings, one or more siblings joined the church in the same year, usually just two and at least one female. More rarely, a

²⁴ Moran, "Religious Renewal, Puritan Tribalism, and the Family in Seventeenth Century Milford, Connecticut", William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series XXXVI (1979), pp. 250 and 253; Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class, pp. 80-81; Turner, p. 320.

²⁵ Of 789 members, 137 had no clear marital status. 424 were married, 42 were widowed by 1860 and remained so while members. 186 were single and appear to have remained so while members (this is obviously not clear for male members).

couple and a sibling would join together, or even one spouse and his or her in-law. Although members often followed extended kin into the church, very few appear to have joined the church with other than their most immediate relations (of course, such relationships are the most difficult to detect). However, in four large and interrelated family groupings--the Connicks, Hannahs, Pulks, and Williams, many of whom were enumerated in close proximity, aunts and nieces, and sets of cousins joined the St. Stephen circuit in the same years. Although living in separate households, one widow and her granddaughter joined the church in the same year of the Milltown revival, though both dropped their membership soon after, and neither her daughter or son-in-law joined.

Those few church members identified only as servants or boarders tended to be from households where there were already Methodists and often church members (again, some newcomers in 1871 not linked to other records may have been in-laws). One was a longtime servant for an old St. Stephen family, where only the grandmother had remained an adherent and, for a while, a member. After the latter ceased her membership, her servant sought adult baptism and joined the church. One exception was Margaret Blair, a Methodist domestic servant in an Anglican household, who joined the

new St. Stephen female class meeting in 1861 at age 22, and remained a member until she left the parish in 1865. Frances Miller, who came to live in St. Stephen with her Anglican daughter's family, joined the church the same year as her fellow boarder, another widow, and was followed in 1874 by two of her Anglican grandchildren. Miller, the widow of a Methodist minister, had herself been converted early in her life "under the influence of a Christian friend".²⁶

When praising Methodism in Saint John, Cooney attributed its strength to the fact that "a great proportion of the church consists of united heads of families and of entire families" (his emphasis).²⁷ Yet despite the tribalism in the process of Methodist growth, patterns of Methodist adherence and membership within St. Stephen households demonstrate the limited extent of family recruitment and the gulf between the ideal and local practice. Most families of all denominations within the two circuits (87%) shared the same nominal adherence, but almost half of those who did not included Methodists. As already indicated, 12% of the 221 adherent families in 1861 and 21% of those in 1871 differed in their adherence. In 128 of the 152 families with different adherences, these differences involved married couples; another six households included boarding couples

²⁶ TPW, 2 September 1876, p. 282 cols. 4-5.

²⁷ Cooney, p. 150.

with different allegiances. In all, 134, or 14%, of the 944 married couples within the two circuits in 1871 differed in their adherence. 'Mixed' marriages were more common in Milltown and Upper Mills, probably reflecting the more diverse denominational traditions. The greater tendency of smaller religious groups to marry outside their smaller marriage pool was evident in St. Stephen, particularly for the Baptists.²⁸ In most Methodist/NonMethodist marriages, women were the Methodists, but frequently if the husband was the Methodist, his wife was a Baptist. Of the 152 divided families within the two circuits, 24 were Catholic/Protestant, generally involving Anglicans or Presbyterians, but five partly Methodist families, and one partly Baptist. The 70 families headed by married couples in which the children took the religion were equally divided between those where the children took the father's adherence and those where the children took the mother's. Another four families headed by married couples with different adherences compromised: the children took a third adherence. There was no distinctively Methodist pattern, but in divided Catholic families, the children were slightly more likely to take the mother's adherence. Reflecting the theological emphasis of

²⁸ Bibby, p. 50. Moreover, because of their orientation towards adult profession and their late reorganization in the village of St. Stephen, Baptists were a more mature group: two thirds of those over 14 in 1871 were married.

Baptists or perhaps the fears of nonBaptist spouses about their children's dying unbaptized, the children of Baptist/NonBaptist couples tended to take the other religion.

For some couples, differences may have had little effect on family life. But for "Maryanne", a Presbyterian married to a Baptist, religious differences were important and affected courtship and marriage. Copied from the Presbyterian Witness, her letter was published in the Wesleyan by a minister lamenting the loss of Methodists through out-marriage. Maryanne argued at length against marrying someone of a different denomination, however attractive and virtuous:

Before marriage we talked the matter over and couldn't agree...like hundreds of others, we 'agreed to disagree....Such agreements never bring that oneness of mind and heart that married Christians are entitled to....My husband won't go with me to church for fear he will see someone sprinkled, and I am shut out of his church occasionally...by close communion...so I prefer not to go there at all. We can't talk of religion without...controversy, so religion is almost a forbidden subject.

Maryanne considered herself more tolerant than her husband, but not self-effacing: "Some argue that it is the woman's place to yield as far as possible all points of difference and be a member of the same church as her husband." However, even with a letter of recommendation from her own church she

could not join his, for "I must..acknowledge that my baptism was invalid, and be rebaptized, which I have not yet felt it my duty to do". She concluded that marrying a "kind-hearted non-professor, of good moral character" was wiser than marrying a member of a different church, as there would be a greater chance of "his being converted" than for "a couple to yield enough of their differences to enable them to walk hand in hand in the Christian life". The post-schism multidenominational pattern of Milltown families descended from McColl converts Abner and Stephen Hill (whose widows were still church members in the the 1860s) may have been the culmination of intergenerational as well as social divisions. According to family tradition, the Anglican William Todd had been forced to elope with Clarissa Hill in 1826 owing to his theological argument with her father over the nature of hell. He became a Methodist for a while, but was one of the leaders of the Milltown schism and a founding member of the Congregationalist church.²⁹

The difficulties Maryanne described explain one way in which Methodism gathered adherents from other denominations. With open communion and the doctrinal flexibility evident in the retention of both infant and adult baptism, Methodism offered a compromise for families such as the McCormicks. In both 1861 and 1871, the father was Presbyterian, the mother

²⁹ TPW, 8 September 1877, p. 6 cols. 1-2; Todd, p. 13.

Anglican, and the children Methodist, one daughter an on and off member at Old Ridge. By 1871 one son had married and become an Anglican, and another daughter had married a Presbyterian, but retained her Methodist adherence; in the mid 1870s, their new Anglican daughter-in-law became a Methodist member. At least 40 families from St. Stephen--19 within the same census household in 1861, eight who had been within the same household in 1851, and 13 new families in 1871--included both one or more Methodists and current or future adherents of two or more other denominations (sometimes two adherents of different denominations, sometimes one individual who changed adherence). Although their numbers were smaller, denominationally mixed families seem to have been more likely to include church members; perhaps for some families such divisions reflected more religious depth or inquiry. Although most such church members were also adherents, in six census families, the sole Methodist adherents were among the young but adult children, but their mothers or siblings were the church members.

Although most Methodist families were united in adherence and perhaps spared Maryanne's troubles, fewer were united in church membership. In 1861, 131 or 59% of the 221 adherent families contained sometime church members between 1851 and

1871. In 43%, only one member had joined or would join, and in another one third only two. Only one fifth had three or more sometime church members. Similarly, 201 or 58% of the 344 adherent families in 1871 included sometime church members between 1861 and 1881. Reflecting the more frequent revivals after 1860 and, as the next chapter will show, the somewhat greater recruitment of the young in the 1870s, the proportion of households with three or more church members had risen slightly to 24%, with 31% having two church members, and 45% only one.

But because of the high turn-over in church membership, a smaller proportion of Methodist families included current church members. In 1861, only 100, or 45%, of adherent families had at least one member in 1860 or 1861. In 1871, which particularly in Milltown marked the lower end of the post-revival cycle, only 135, or 39%, of adherent families had at least one member in 1870 or 1871.³⁰ One can only speculate whether families felt that one person could represent them at class meeting, for an impressionistic survey of family patterns of church membership suggests that often the departure of the current church member coincided with the joining of the next. Of course, as will be discussed in the final chapter, the deaths of family members

³⁰ This combination of two years was chosen because the 1871 census was taken on April 1, and because the 1871 Milltown records are missing.

may have prompted church membership for some. This pattern of church membership by proxy, which has been found in other Protestant communities³¹ and might be said to be current practice, contrasts with the remembered pattern of the early years of this century. Then, at least according to local United Church tradition, families freed from the requirement of a traditional conversion experience or attending class meeting joined the church together.

In surveying families with Methodist adherents or members, one can identify a number of types, some with precision, others inferentially or by example, remembering that the absence of information about church attendance or private belief prohibits classifying families by religiosity. Although adherent families who never joined the church or adherent families with one church member were the most common, the most interesting are those with a multi-denominational background or those who succeeded in recruiting more than one church member. Of most benefit to Methodist growth were obviously those who moved towards greater formal Methodist commitment, often coming from the immigrant Anglican or Presbyterian traditions. traditions. The denominational journey of two Barter Settlement families began with two Irish immigrants--John and Sarah McLaughlin--who were Methodist members as early as 1849 and

³¹ McLeod, p. 29.

remained so until their deaths. Their daughter and son-in-law also joined the church in 1859 and remained throughout the period. The family transition was not complete, for both couples were still Anglicans in the 1861 census, becoming Methodists by 1871. The son-in-law came from a Presbyterian family within the parish, but by 1871 his parents had become Anglicans. A Union Mills family traced its immediate origins to the parish of St. Patrick, but had arrived from Ireland in 1840. The first to join the church was the mother--Mary King, followed in 1859 by her daughter, son, and daughter-in-law. In the 1861 census, she, her husband, and the two oldest daughters (including the church member) still appeared as Presbyterians, but the other siblings and the son's family next door were Methodists. One more daughter joined in the 1869 revival, and the father joined in 1872 along with his rejoining daughter-in-law. Although all by 1871 were Methodist adherents, only the older couple and the daughter-in-law remained members for more than a few years.

Another type of family with either divided or changed adherence over time could be called experimental, in that some or all of their members were involved in the smaller or more sectarian groups, such as the Baptists. By 1861, members of one 1851 St. Stephen family consisted of a

Methodist mother and two adult children, but in a separate household one Baptist son now married to a Presbyterian. In another family, two siblings had moved to St. Stephen by 1861 where they were Methodist adherents and briefly members. Their family in St. Patrick were Baptists, except for one Methodist son; however the latter moved to St. Stephen by 1871, where he and his new wife appeared as Presbyterians. A third family consisted of Baptists in 1861 who divided into Free Christian Baptists and Methodists by 1871, except for one son who had married and become a Congregationalist. In 1871, Charlotte County's sole Bible Christians--a more sectarian form of Methodism--were a young married couple whose neighbouring in-laws were Baptists. Two Anglican and Baptist families converged into Methodists, some becoming church members, but the most complete shift occurred in an Upper Mills family of recent English immigrants. In 1861, the Fairheads were Baptists, but the father and two daughters joined the Methodist church in the 1869 revival; by 1871 all were Methodists, and after the mother's death, four more relations joined the church. The Fairheads may have been originally Anglican, for in 1871 the Anglican servant of the Upper Mills class leader was a recent English immigrant and the only other Fairhead in the parish.

Some families appear to have oscillated between the more or less evangelical and the more or less Calvinist: in one, the wife joined the Methodist church briefly, though a Presbyterian in 1861; although listed as a Methodist adherent in 1861, the daughter became a Baptist by 1871. In that year, her now widowed mother was listed as a Congregationalist, but with a ten year old Methodist relation. Another family consisted in 1861 of a Methodist adherent and member grandmother, two Universalist sons, and a Baptist daughter-in-law. By 1871, the grandmother and the daughter-in-law were Universalists, but the unmarried son had become a Baptist. The Knights, headed by former Methodist members, were mainly Free Will Baptists in 1861, with a Presbyterian father and oldest son. They had left by 1871, but their 1861 neighbours, also Presbyterian/Baptists, were Methodists by 1871, and the wife joined the church in 1877.

Ernest Sandeen has shown that for its leadership and apologists millenarianism was a refuge for those basically though not systematically oriented towards Calvinism. He argued that the Arminianism, perfectionism, and essential optimism of Methodists may explain why fewer of them became Adventists, despite their similar revivalism.³² Although

³² Ernest Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 59, 152, 163, 177.

some of St. Stephen's 1871 Adventists were recent American immigrants or married to such, it seems probable that theology or temperament rather than politics may explain those Adventist members of older St. Stephen families, including some Methodists. One Mohannas farming family of Adventists in 1871, descendants of the parish's first settlers, had been Methodist church members in the 1850s and were still adherents in 1861. A young Adventist couple new to the parish may have been Methodists like the husband's sister; another Adventist wife was married to a Universalist husband who came from a religiously diverse family. All Baptists in 1861, the widowed mother and three children had become Methodist adherents by 1871, and the mother was baptized in the Methodist church. The shift from Universalism to millenarianism--if in the pessimistic sectarian form of its leaders--seems incredible, yet two Universalists--mother and son--became Adventists, perhaps influenced by the new American daughter-in-law. From the Courier's limited coverage of the Adventists, it seems that Adventists may have posed the greatest perceived threat to the Baptists, who also drew on other denominations. One Adventist husband in 1871, although married to a Baptist, had been an Anglican in 1861. One recent American family of Adventists went at least partly (and perhaps by 1881)

entirely over to the Methodists: in St. Stephen, Fanny Gordon joined the youth's class in 1874, and her father joined the church in the 1878 revival.

Although representing an extreme in social class and theology, the growth of Swedenborgianism in North America paralleled Adventism and was also an experimental religion. St. Stephen's Swedenborgians--related members of the Hill and Upton families--had been Methodists, but their origins in the previous generation were Presbyterian, and those Methodists who did not become Swedenborgians returned to the Presbyterians. Because of the absence of organized and established Presbyterianism in the parish during the first half of the century, families from this group may have been as denominationally diverse as Methodists. Most of the descendants of a Scottish immigrant who had settled on Old Ridge in the eighteenth century were listed in the 1861 census as Anglicans and Congregationalists. Those still in Old Ridge had pews in the Methodist church, but only one grandson--married to the granddaughter of the first McColl convert--was a Methodist adherent.³³

Other families represented moves away from or resistance to evangelicalism. One couple originally from St. James--the husband a Methodist and the wife in Baptist in

³³ See Knowlton, pp. 128 and 126, for the families of Aaron Upton and Andrew Murchie, and census returns for the adherences of their descendants.

1861--were both Anglicans by 1871. By that year, another family from St. James consisted of a Universalist father, a Methodist mother and son, and another son now an Anglican like his wife. A Presbyterian family in 1861 was headed by a married couple, former Methodist church members; although the mother, one son and his wife were Methodists by 1871, the father remained Presbyterian, and the remaining children had become Congregationalists.

Finally, there were a few families whose religious differences or journeys were substantial for their time. One of the five Methodist/Catholic families in 1871 represented, on the wife's side, a family tradition of diversity. Her father in 1861 had been a Universalist, her mother a Free Christian Baptist; by 1871, her now widowed father, an English immigrant labourer, was a Methodist. Although listed, like her husband and children, as a Catholic in 1861, Abigail Fitzmaurice became a Methodist adherent by 1871 and joined the church. Her married sister had been a Presbyterian in 1861, a Baptist in 1871, and in 1880 joined the Methodist church. Two 1871 Protestant families had been partly or entirely Catholic in 1861. After the deaths of the Catholic father and one Anglican son, the remaining Anglican Faloons became Methodists; the mother joined the church in 1869, followed a few years after her death in 1876 by her

daughter-in-law. All Catholic in 1861, the Coughrans by 1871 consist of Congregationalists, Universalists, and one Methodist son. The Randells appeared to move in spiritually opposite directions: the mother was a member from at least 1851 until her death in 1879, and her daughter joined the church for roughly five years, remaining an adherent in 1871. The father, listed as a Methodist in 1861, reported in 1871 that he had no religion.

One might well ask if any St. Stephen Methodist family came close to the denominational ideal of united church membership or if any evidence points to the possibility of an authentic family religious culture. In fact, the family that comes closest to this still demonstrates the limits of familial evangelism. The Robinsons represented at least four generations of Irish Methodism, whose combative origins in a hostile environment from Protestant and Catholic rivals and whose early use of the Irish language made it a unique cultural phenomenon.³⁴ Ann Jane Robinson was born in 1793 in Malabrack where "great pains were taken, especially by her mother, to train her up in 'the fear of God', and the 'in the nurture and admonition of the Holy Ghost'". Some time after her marriage, she joined the Methodist church, but was apparently not converted until after she and her family moved to the city of Armagh. The Robinsons emigrated to New

³⁴ Bowen, p. 37; Hempton, pp. 117-19.

Brunswick in 1832, and soon after she, her husband, and eventually her children became members of the Milltown circuit. Both James and his son William were farmers and painters, living first in Barter Settlement and later in the village. Ann Jane's religious journey was exceptional, for not only was she convinced that she had achieved entire sanctification in 1841, but she became a leader of a male and female class meeting in 1845, and held this position until her death in 1853.

Her son William succeeded her, and remained a leader of one or two classes throughout his residence in the circuit, interrupted briefly in the mid 1860s. The religious journey of his sister Rebecca was also memorialized with detail in the Wesleyan, as was that of Sarah his first wife, an English immigrant who sought and received the assurance of entire sanctification as her death approached. All of Sarah's children except one daughter who died young, William's second wife, his daughter-in-law, and his son by his second wife all became church members. Ann Jane's two daughters married Irish immigrant painters and also joined the church with their husbands. The older sister's stepson and eventually his wife, Laura Cleland, joined the church even though the latter was a Universalist. Cleland was then dropped from the class meeting list with the comment "not a member of the church", suggesting that she had not shaken

off her Universalism, but a few years later with a new minister or perhaps a new faith she rejoined. However, one of Ann Jane's sons never joined the Methodist church. He married a Presbyterian, and by 1861 he was a Restitutionist (a form of Universalist) and she a Congregationalist.³⁵

Some evidence of a multidenominational family religious culture comes from two intermarried families. Robert Stevenson (Senior) had emigrated from Scotland to St. Andrews in 1818, followed a year later by his wife and six sons. Beginning in 1839, they held annual family reunions at which they "Read the Scriptures, sang and prayed together":

Great peace and unanimity prevailed, and all felt 'how good and how pleasant it was for brethren to dwell together in unity'. The chapter read on that occasion and at every anniversary since was the 24th of Joshua, in which are recounted the assembling of the tribes at Shechem and God's gracious dealings with them. They adopted the motto 'As for me and my house we will serve the Lord'.

By 1871, the oldest son of the 'founder', this son's wife and their children still at home were Baptist adherents, and the parents were also Baptist members. However in 1861 and 1871, his brothers in St. Andrews and his other sons in St.

³⁵ This family profile is based on the project's data base, the 1841 Milltown assessment RS148/C14 (PANB), Milltown circuit and Charlotte County marriage records, SSRC, and four obituaries: TPW, 24 February 1853, p. 2 col. 1; TPW, 13 February 1861, p. 2 cols. 3-4; TPW, 28 November 1874, p. 1 cols. 6-7; SCC, 15 August 1889, p. 3 col. 4.

Stephen were Methodists. The two sons had been ship carpenters living in a boarding house, but both married into and moved in with a recently arrived Irish Methodist family. Samuel and Eliza Creighton and their two daughters had become church members in 1856, followed by the older son in 1859. The parents remained so until their death, though the children dropped their membership, and the youngest son never joined. While the Creighton/Stevenson men were carpenters, the women shared a common occupation outside the home, and were among the few Methodist women so listed in the 1871 census. Eliza Creighton, her two daughters, and her daughters' sister-in-law Janet Stevenson were milliners and dressmakers, and probably all in the same establishment listed in local directories. Eliza Creighton became a class meeting leader in 1873, and in 1874 her two daughters rejoined with their husbands and three of their husbands' siblings. The two Stevenson husbands, Methodist adherents since at least 1861, and their Baptist sister also sought adult baptism in the Methodist church in 1874; these two brothers became, respectively, a trustee and the choir leader, while the sister led a new girls' class meeting. Despite the difference between their Presbyterian origins and their eventual Baptist and Methodist affiliations, the size of the Stevenson reunion in St. Stephen in

1873--roughly 40 persons--suggests that this family's religious culture was not denominational, but evangelical.³⁶

Although many families came from mixed denominational backgrounds, the evidence at least for those families present in both 1861 and 1871 shows that in the short run most stayed united in adherence, though rarely in membership. The transience of the period and the problems of establishing family histories make speculating about the nature of the tradition over the long run more difficult. Because of Duncan McColl's long tenure, a few of his converts were still members in the early 1860s, when the two circuits represented essentially a fourth generation community. Several families made up a group of at least 63 church members in the 1860s and 1870s descended from or married to descendants of Duncan McColl's first convert, Mehitable Getchell. Yet they were only a fraction of the larger community of nevermember adherents descended from her, who lived not just in Getchell and Barter Settlements, but throughout the parish. Moreover, surveying the families of other McColl converts, such as Abner and Stephen Hill, Alexander Thompson, Robert Watson Sen., shows that many of their descendants in the 1860s and 1870s were no longer adherents or members of Methodist churches.³⁷

³⁶ SCC, 13 November 1873, p. 3 col. 5; TPW, 26 September 1879, p. 5 col. 4; SSRC.

But concluding this exploration of families and their varying ties with Methodism requires separating the question of tribalism into two parts. That many families recruited church members from among themselves and that changes in adherence often took place as part of family relationships have been established. But to what extent did 'old' or 'new' families contribute to Methodist growth? Answering this question within the limits of this topic can involve only a tentative outline. The absence of genealogical information about many individuals, particularly married women, and the intermarriage of new and old families makes a definite classification impossible. Moreover, as shown earlier, the effect of transience on church growth was significant. The origins of Methodist families living together in 1861 or 1871 and containing four or more church members between the 1850s and the 1870s convey the mixture of tribalism, transience, and proselytism that shaped Methodist growth. These 33 families, ranging in size between four and ten, included 153 sometime church members. In all but three families, the origins of both the oldest spouses were established, in another three only the origins of the husband (two descended from eighteenth century settlers and the third from those of the early nineteenth century). The

³⁷ BNAWMM, September 1841, p. 491, January 1842, p. 51; Knowlton, p. 36, pp. 124-28; TPW, 19 November 1857, p. 2 col. 2; SCC, 9 October 1873, p. 2 col. 4.

very absence of marriage records for the two youngest families in the former group suggests that both spouses were new to the parish. In eight families, the most senior spouses were both descended from eighteenth century settlers, in another six only one spouse, their partners being British immigrants or members of transient pre-1851 North American families. Two Methodist families were headed by British immigrants of the 1830s and 1840s, but another two consisted almost entirely of recent immigrants. Three families were from elsewhere in Charlotte County, and another five were North Americans new to St. Stephen. Lastly, of four families converted from other denominations, two were of pre-1851 immigrant origin, one consisted of recent immigrants, and one of North Americans. As this summary suggests, quite apart from the out-migration from old families during much of the century, the arrival of new families and the conversion of families to or away from Methodism diminished the force of tribalism in church growth.

As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, historians have speculated that lowered ages at church entry reflected increasing tribalism--the search for growth from the children of old families rather than among new adults. However, even the youngest church members in St. Stephen

illustrate tribalism's limited influence on the whole of church growth. Of the 18 members of the girls' class in the mid 1870s, five were from families not in any previous St. Stephen census, another five were from other denominations, and one was the daughter of recent British immigrants. Only a few of the remainder came from clearly identifiable old Methodist families. Moreover, as the next chapter will show, only a minority of Methodist members joined while they were young and residing with their parents. According to the Wesleyan, because Methodism:

Frowns upon bigotry, exclusiveness, and isolation...parents are liable to be less anxious than they ought to be that their children should cherish a discriminating but deep and abiding attachment to Methodism and early and permanently identify themselves with it.³⁸

In short, Methodism's associational fluidity and proselytism may have been both its strength in gathering converts, and its weakness in losing them.

³⁸ TPW, 1 May 1872, p. 2 col. 1.

Chapter VIII

The Demography of Church Growth (2): Youth

In 1859, the Wesleyan copied from an American Methodist paper an almost incredible article entitled "Early Piety". Anticipating the demographic studies of New England churches undertaken by modern historians, it exemplified the contemporary zeal for religious statistics, in a era of calculations by hand. "Having examined the lives, experiences, biographies, autobiographies etc. of...departed Christians", the writer found that 3,753 "commenced their religious career" when under 20, 2,225 between "20 and 30", 929 between "30 and 40", 412 between "40 and 50", and 282 between "50 and 100". Although the author concluded that "nearly one half embraced religion under 20 years", his figures also show that 29% of the total fell into the next group, and 21% were over 30. He did not specify what he meant by the beginning of a religious career, but his analysis did not count Sunday school attendance, since he claimed that such information would have "augmented" his totals.¹

¹ TPW, 19 May 1859, p. 1 col. 4.

The historiography concerning the place of and attitudes towards children or youth within voluntarist churches is considerable, and for North American communities forms part of a larger argument over whether adolescence in the modern sense existed before the First Awakenings.² Although the diversity in this literature reflects different questions, methodologies, and definitions of 'young', most falls into one of two categories. One approach looks at intellectual and organizational evidence generated by religious writers and institutions concerned with youth. The second looks at descriptions of revivals or demographic analyses of membership records to determine patterns of age at conversion. Because the evidence from print culture and the evidence from religious behaviour have so rarely been combined in the same study, the former can easily be misinterpreted.

² Philip Greven and Gerald F. Moran in his early work argued that lowered ages at conversion in the first Awakening were part of a changing and earlier maturation process (see Philip J. Greven, "Youth, Maturity, and Religious Conversion: A Note on the Ages of Converts in Andover, Massachusetts, 1711-1749", Essex Institute Historical Collections 108(1972), pp. 119-34 and Moran, "Conditions of Religious Conversion in the First Society of Norwich, Connecticut, 1718-1744", Journal of Social History(1972), 331-43). However, Moran did not reiterate this in his later work (see Moran and Vinovskis, "The Puritan Family and Religion: A Critical Appraisal", p. 46).

Canadian historians have argued from the increasing Methodist literary and institutional concern with the young that even though "youth had always dominated their ranks", by the decades of Methodism's unification there was a "downward trend" in the age of converts, in other words, that "conversion was increasingly a rite of passage".³ However, other evidence cited in support of this argument shows the change to have occurred much later. According to aggregate denominational records from Ontario, 3% of Methodist new members were reported as coming through the Sunday school in 1862, and 19% by 1890; only by the early twentieth century did children from Sunday school form the majority of Methodist new members (60%).⁴ As this chapter will elaborate, studies of American evangelical print culture (in which this change is thought to have occurred much earlier) contrast with demographic studies of voluntarist churches which show considerable variations in patterns of age at conversion. In short, ideological change did not necessarily parallel behavioural change. After relating the former change in wider evangelical culture to Maritime and local Methodism, this chapter will show that

³ Grant, A Profusion of Spires, p. 165; Neil Semple, "'The Nurture and Admonition of the Lord': Nineteenth Century Canadian Methodism's Response to 'Childhood'", Histoire Sociale/Social History, 14(1981), pp. 158 and 168.

⁴ Grant, Profusion of Spires, p. 171.

youthful members remained only a minority within St. Stephen class meetings during the 1860s and 1870s.

Between the mid-eighteenth and the early twentieth centuries, the evangelical conception of the ideal preparation of the young for church membership was gradually transformed. The Puritan pattern of adult introspection followed by crisis and conversion was increasingly supplemented and in some denominational traditions replaced by the idea of 'Christian nurture', popularized by but not exclusive to the American Horace Bushnell. Joseph Kett approximately dates this change in New England to the period 1815 to 1860, citing the proliferation of literature and periodicals with essentially Evangelical or Liberal assumptions about moral education. Much of this literature was aimed at mothers or lay leaders, but much was also aimed specifically at children. The institutional evidence of greater denominational concern for the young includes the development of college moral societies, ritual college revivals, and religious organizations aimed at youth--from the Methodist Sunday Schools of late eighteenth century England and the young people's societies of early New England to their culmination in the youth movements of the 1880s and 1890s, such as the Methodist Epworth League. From the images of print or material culture, Colleen McDannell

has argued that in the ideal mid-century Protestant home "instruction" had "replaced worship as the primary religious ritual", and that Protestantism had "moved from being the religion of the converted adult to being the education of the innocent child".⁵

By the 1860s, Maritime Methodism appears to have been both, for annual Pastoral Addresses exhorted Methodists to family prayer and the family conversion. At the dedication of the new St. Stephen church in 1870, the sermon preached by a Methodist minister from a neighbouring circuit called "believers" to "dedicate hearts, substance, and children to His service".⁶ At the level of clerical debate, nevertheless, there was a "shift in the Methodist Church's response to the young", in its "re-evaluation of the theological assumptions as to the native spiritual condition of the child" and the "related dispensation granted by baptism".⁷ In retaining both infant and adult baptism and Wesley's equivocal position on their meaning and nature, Methodist clergy were forced to explain repeatedly this

⁵ Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America 1790 to the Present (New York: Basic Books, 1977), Chapters 3 and 6. Colleen McDannell, The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840-1900 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 93.

⁶ See EBAC and NBPEIC; TPW, 12 October 1870, p. 1 col. 6.

⁷ Semple, "'The Nurture and Admonition of the Lord'", p. 159.

position within the church and defend it from critics without.⁸ The most articulate clearly distinguished between the ceremony of baptism as an outward sign, and the actual or potential regeneration of an adult or "consecration" of the child.⁹ According to one Wesleyan editor, there was "no incongruity, but rather beauty and harmony in the representation of baptism, as being at once a sign of grace, a pledge of grace, and a means of grace."¹⁰ However, letters and published 'dialogues' on the subject suggest that this was not uniformly understood or accepted.¹¹

As argued in Chapter Two (pp. 51-53), Methodism had always embodied both the Puritan conversion pattern and the idea of Christian nurture. Wesley had emphasized repentance rather than regeneration as the prerequisite for membership, approved both sudden and gradual sanctification, and

⁸ The following discussion is based on articles in the Wesleyan and works published by Methodist ministers in the Maritimes. These include two by D. D. Currie, the minister from St. David whose sermon was cited earlier: A Catechism of Baptism: Enlarged Edition (Halifax: A. W. Nicholson, Methodist Book Room, 1874); Currie, Open Letters on Baptism with an Appendix on Certain Baptist Inconsistences, in reply to Rev. John Brown (Halifax: Printed at the 'Wesleyan' Book and Job Office, 1878); John Lathern, Baptisma: The Mode and Subjects of Christian Baptism (Halifax, N.S., Rev. Dr. Pickard, 1879).

⁹ TPW, 11 December 1861, p. 2 cols. 4-6; 9 November 1864, p. 2 cols. 1-2; 1 May 1872, p. 2 cols. 2-3.

¹⁰ TPW, 21 December 1864, p.2 col. 7.

¹¹ TPW, 4 January 1865, p. 2 cols. 5-6; 17 November 1869, p. 2 cols. 5-6.

accepted Sunday schools. Writing essentially about Ontario, Neil Semple has argued that part of the shift in Methodism's theological appraisal of the young was "a more substantial alliance with...Sunday schools", during the last half of the nineteenth century. In contrast, in "early Canada...Sunday schools had an organization and vitality of their own, were deeply jealous of denominational interference, and thus only vaguely associated with any church." If Semple is correct in his reading of Ontario Methodism, this experience is somewhat different from that of St. Stephen. The first Sunday School in the parish was organized in 1830, and followed soon after by one in Milltown, suggesting that McColl, like the first resident rector, had not approved of them. Although known as the 'Union' school, the school was appraised every year by the New Brunswick District and occasionally described in the Reports of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society of England. Even more administrative attention was paid to Sunday Schools after the formation of the regional conference in 1855.¹²

Much of Methodism's multi-denominational background in St. Stephen may have originated in its monopoly of local Sunday schools between 1830 and 1849. When the Methodists introduced the Anglican catechism in that year, the

¹² Semple, "'The Nurture and Admonition of the Lord'", pp. 160 and 170-71; TPW, 2 October 1868, p. 2 cols. 2-4.

Presbyterians attempted to add the Westminster Shorter Catechism, and failing, withdrew and formed their own school. At the celebration of fifty years of Sunday schools in St. Stephen, the only Anglican school represented was from Trinity Mission Church which had recently separated from Christ Church. The Baptists of St. Stephen had also recently established a Sunday school with their first church in 1869. The Methodist Sunday schools in Upper Mills (which operated all year round) and in Old Ridge (which closed in winter) were multid denominational like their parent congregations, since there were no other local alternatives. In 1866, the Conference stated that Sunday schools should not conflict with public worship, which could mean either that they often did, or that a small trend was to be checked.¹³

The number of children enrolled in these schools and of adults in what appear to have been Bible classes rose and fell with revivals. After 1876, the District separated the numbers of "primary", "intermediate", and "adult" students. As Table 7 below indicates, half of all the students in the District were in the intermediate classes, but there were some variations. Although overall enrollment fell the first few years, including the first months of the 1878 revival,

¹³ SCC, 29 July 1880, p. 2 cols. 2-4; EBAC, 1866; SSDM, 1877

the primary total doubled the year after, suggesting that one delayed response of parents to the revival was to enroll their children in Sunday School.¹⁴

Table 7: Sunday School Enrollment St. Stephen District 1876-81

	Primary	Intermediate	Adult	Total
1876	128 23%	287 54%	119 22%	534
1877	80 13%	384 65%	130 22%	594
1878	77 15%	299 59%	122 24%	511
1879	212 30%	376 54%	73 10%	696
1880	205 29%	360 52%	131 19%	696
1881	205 31%	371 56%	84 13%	660

In the absence of diaries or memoirs, it is, of course, impossible to convey the Sunday school experience. Although George Boardman, reminiscing about his youth in the 1830s, recollected that the harsh discipline of the day school then extended into the Sunday school, by 1876 the District was pleased to report of the St. Stephen school that "the discipline" was "kindly but effectually enforced".¹⁵

Despite Methodist use of the Anglican catechism, one Saint John layman claimed in 1860 that Methodists relied too much

¹⁴ NBDM, 1826-55, SJDM, 1856-73; NBPEI, 1876-81; given the multid denominational background of some schools and the absence of precise age groupings, I made no attempt to represent these figures as proportions of Methodist children.

¹⁵ SCC, 17 October 1895, p. 2 col. 2; SSDM, 1876.

on American Sunday School materials. The first meeting of the New Brunswick District in 1826 had urged the establishment and maintenance of Sunday school libraries, and within a decade both the St. Stephen and Milltown circuits had done so. By 1866, the libraries of the combined Sunday schools of both circuits included 350 volumes.¹⁶ After 1873, the Methodist schools in St. Stephen, like many throughout North America, began to use the International Series of Sunday School Lessons developed by John H. Vincent, an American Methodist who would found the Epworth League and the Chatauqua movement. The New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island Conference praised Vincent's series in 1878, but warned that the "old catechisms...should not be set aside". Of course, one need only recall Mark Twain's satire to acknowledge how little or contradictory an effect Sunday school fare may have had on families. Moreover, in 1878 the Sunday School reports of the St. Stephen District (which included surrounding circuits) deplored "the lack of interest taken in this branch of Christian work by parents".¹⁷

¹⁶ TPW, 10 October 1860, p. 2 cols. 4-5; NBDM, 1826; RWMMS, 1834, p. 92; EBAC, 1866.

¹⁷ SJDM, 1873; NBPEI, 1878; SSDM, 1878.

The debate on baptism led easily to the debate on the moral status of children, and this in turn related to the debate on the process of ideal Methodist formation from the Sunday school to church membership. According to the Wesleyan in 1877, despite renewed discussion on the subject, "from the beginning of Methodism--there was a general assent amongst us...that all who die in infancy go to heaven".¹⁸ Defining infancy ambiguously as "before the period at which personal responsibility begins", Cranswick Jost wrote that infants were saved by virtue of the Atonement, but the theological details, particularly the relation of infant salvation to baptism, were acknowledged to be mysterious. Jost then argued that because of the work of grace implied in the possibility of infant salvation, some children might never have "such an experience of sin as to make a separation between God and them", and thus would be unable to experience the conversion process sought by fallen but repentant adults. The subsequent correspondence in the Wesleyan questioning his views suggests that although this debate may have become more controversial in this period, it did not substantially alter the prevailing notion of trial membership.¹⁹

¹⁸ TPW, 28 April 1877, p. 4 cols. 3-5; 9 November 1864, p. 2 cols. 1-2; 19 May 1877, p. 4 cols. 4-5.

¹⁹ TPW, 6 November 1875, p. 1 cols. 1-3; 13 November 1875, p. 1 cols. 1-3; See the correspondence in 17 December

Although an 1881 Wesleyan editorial lamented the "lack of connection between our Sunday Schools and the Church", a less severe critic wrote in 1872 that "The Sabbath School is becoming year by year in every Christian country a connecting link between the world and the church, the congregation and the class meeting". According to Kett, American Methodists "had long promoted conversions in early adolescence", unlike the Congregationalists and Presbyterians.²⁰ Although the problem of interpreting stereotyped language makes it difficult to identify change in the nature of transition from Sunday school to church membership in local Methodism, the limited sources from the earlier period suggest less explicit concern with such conversions. Reporting on the schools in St. Stephen in 1836, one minister wrote that "many of the scholars have been enlightened and edified in things relative to their eternal welfare". Cooney used very common verdant imagery to describe Sunday schools as "nurseries in which seeds of Christian knowledge and virtue are sown...and are there tended and nourished, until they grow up and are matured into 'Cedars of Lebanon', and trees of righteousness".²¹

1875, 25 December 1875, and 8 January 1876.

²⁰ TPW, 21 January 1881, p. 4 cols. 1-2; 11 September 1872, p. 4 cols. 1-3; Kett, p. 65.

²¹ RWMMS, 1836, p. 73; Cooney, p. 273.

In 1859, the Wesleyan ambiguously editorialized on the meaning of baptism and the moral state of children and asked rhetorically: "Why should not children be the companions of their parents, or the older members of their families" at the class meeting. Although neither using the word conversion nor explicitly mentioning the possibility of damnation, one 1868 writer cited the risk of early death from disease or accident as urgent reason for children to be "led to Christ". The 1871 Conference used the "nursery" image, stressing nurture as well as "conversion and introduction into the membership". In 1874, the Saint John District reported the "conversion" during revivals of many "scholars":

In a few instances, the almost entire increase of our membership has been from among the young, who in these Institutes have received not only their first impressions of being sinners, but through the prayers and teachings of the affectionate labourers...have decided for Christ.

The views of this observer both contrast with and anticipate those of the 1881 editor cited earlier who argued that revivals should "be for outsiders", rather than "the families of those who are regular attendants and educated in religious things". Rather than teaching children to wait for a revival, parents and layleaders should strive for "faithful, religious education, with constant view to conversion". Without mentioning the self-doubt necessary

for an awareness of sin, he added that "consecration, devotion, love are for children, and they should be taught that it is their privilege in their childish years to love their Saviour".²²

One typically Methodist measure of concern for Sunday school conversions was their tabulation. This occurred earlier among Wesleyan Methodists in Ontario than in the Maritimes. Despite the Ontario Wesleyans' later integration of Sunday schools into the denomination, which may be overstated by Semple, by the early 1860s they were counting converted scholars. In contrast, the New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island Conference did not undertake this until 1876, unfortunately not distinguishing whether the conversions came from intermediate or adult classes and who constituted adults. The following figures in Table 8, which refer to the combined circuits surrounding and including St. Stephen and Milltown, once again illustrate that not all converts met in class meetings, nor were all those in class meetings necessarily converts. According to the District Minutes, the Upper Mills Sunday School was in a "very good" condition and "several" students had converted in both 1875 and 1876, "some meeting in class". Although "some" conversions from the Sunday schools of St. Stephen and

²² TPW, 12 October 1859, p. 2 cols. 2-3; 2 October 1868, p. 2 cols. 2-4; EBAC, 1871; SJDM, 1874.

Milltown occurred during the 1878 revival, most of the 100 reported above must have been from other circuits, or simply among the converts who did not join the church.²³ For a few years after 1874, three young women in St. Stephen led a class meeting composed entirely of girls from the Sunday School. Such class meetings were still uncommon in this decade: the Wesleyan reported in 1881, as a phenomena to be encouraged, that "several churches in our concern have now a class meeting composed of Sunday school children".²⁴

Table 8: Sunday School Enrollment St. Stephen District 1876-81

	Total	Converts	Meeting in Class
1876	534	14	36
1877	594	1	11
1878	511	100	31
1879	696	-	38
1880	696	13	20
1881	660	3	21

Although this literary and organizational evidence suggests greater denominational concern with the young, only demographic analysis of church records can show to what extent Methodist church growth drew on its youngest

²³ Semple, "The Nurture and Admonition of the Lord", pp. 171-72; NBPEIC, NSC, 1876-81; SSDM, 1875-78.

²⁴ TPW, 8 April 1881, p. 4 col. 6.

constituency. Indeed, the conclusions from the first 'cultural' approach to the problem have led some to pose the question as if conversion and church membership were especially associated with varying definitions of youth. Hillel Schwarz has shown how observers used stereotypes of both youth and religious experience to support or attack revivals in ante-bellum Boston. The "adolescent conversion syndrome" became a key part of the ideology of late nineteenth century youth work and early American psychology, and although subsequently abandoned by the latter, was picked up and revised by historians.²⁵ From revival accounts which seemed to comment unduly on the presence of the young, with or without specific ages, many concluded that an existing trend "toward teenage conversions" accelerated in the early nineteenth century.²⁶ A preliminary study of East Cheshire Methodists between 1750 and 1830 suggested that "the conversion experience seems to have occurred most commonly between the ages of 12 and 21", but did not document whether this was based on descriptions of revivals

²⁵ Hillel Schwarz, "Adolescence and Revivals in Ante-Bellum Boston", Journal of Religious History, (1979), pp. 144-158; Kett, pp. 63-64, pp. 204-207.

²⁶ Kett, Rites of Passage, pp. 64-65; Kett, "Adolescence and Youth in Nineteenth-Century America", in The Family in History: Interdisciplinary Essays, ed. Theodore K. Rabb and Robert I. Rotberg (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 101-03; Nancy F. Cott, "Young Women in the Second Great Awakening", Feminist Studies 3(1975), p. 16; Rawlyk, pp. 121-23.

or the demography of converts.²⁷ In contrast, most quantitative studies which calculated age at conversion (primarily from the membership of seventeenth to nineteenth century New England Congregationalism, but also of Nova Scotian Baptists, and from obituaries of nineteenth century English Methodists) have found that church membership remained an adult behaviour, with average ages at first church membership as high as the thirties, though usually lower during revivals. However, such averages can be misleading, since these studies also show a wide range in age at membership--within a single year or church, or over birth cohorts, regions, or time periods.²⁸ Although some studies focused on conversion as a psychological crisis associated with the situation of the young in English or American society,²⁹ the wide range in ages of converts during revivals and over time rendered such hypotheses relevant only for that portion of them who were young.

²⁷ Gail Malmgreen, "Domestic Discords: Women and the Family in East Cheshire Methodism, 1750-1830", in Disciplines of Faith, p. 59.

²⁸ Grossbart, pp. 705-06; Greven, pp. 132-33; Goodwin, p. 199; Obelkevich, pp. 241-42; Werner, p. 155.

²⁹ Malmgreen, "Domestic Discords", p. 59, Cott, "Young Women", pp. 19-20; William F. Willingham, "Religious Conversion in the Second Society of Windham, Connecticut, 1723-43: a Case Study", Societas, (1976), pp. 109-19.

These varying conclusions are not incompatible if there were relatively few youthful conversions prior to the Awakenings, so that an increase would be notable without altering the overall pattern of a wide range of ages at conversion. If the weakness of literary sources on youth and revivals is that their observations may have reflected either the ordinary or the unusual, the weakness of the earliest quantitative studies was their dependence on small numbers and their use of mean age at membership, which produced higher averages because of wide ranges. The focus of some studies--often the peak years of the Awakenings--may also have prevented their analysis from uncovering the overall demographic pattern of church membership. Furthermore, there may be important differences between the demography of different types of denominational commitment. Finally, determining whether the age structure of new members was any different from that of the population at large or the 'constituency' of a particular church is impossible for British, American, or early Maritime communities which lack a household by household enumeration of adherence.

Fortunately, it is possible to compare the age structure of new Methodist members in St. Stephen with that of the pool of adherents from which they came. Distinguishing the

rate of church membership among age groups from patterns of age at church membership is particularly important in a longitudinal study such as this, where a member who joined the church at 15 in 1861 will be the same age as another who joined the church at 30 in 1876. To avoid distorting the results, establishing the 'best' age boundaries of the groups for comparison was essential. As described in Chapter Four (pp. 154-55), the age groups used in the following analysis reflect both commonly identified stages of the life course and the fact that no full member joined before age 10 and relatively few joined before age 15. Both the rate of church membership among these age groups and the age composition of 'first-time' members show that the association of youth with conversion, though important, has been overstated.

Since many who joined in the late 1860s were listed only in the 1861 census, the following table pools all individuals over the age of nine in 1871 ever listed as a Methodist in either year, enlarging the church's constituency over the two decades to 1,772 adherents.³⁰ It was possible to calculate the age at joining for 497 members³¹ between 1860 and 1881; most of the remainder had

³⁰ Since membership is considered as a proportion of the age group, the inflation of the oldest age group and the absence of the new adherents in 1881 does not affect the conclusions.

Table 9: Methodist Adherents - Age in 1871 over 9

Age in 1871	Methodist New Members 1866-75			All Adherents 1861 + 1871		Nevermember adherents 1861 + 1871		
	N	%New	%Age	N	%Adher	N	%Nevmem	%Age
10-14	22	10%	8%	265	15%	231	18%	87%
15-24	62	28%	13%	453	25%	382	30%	84%
25-39	66	31%	12%	540	31%	389	30%	72%
40-54	43	20%	16%	266	15%	148	12%	57%
55+	23	11%	9%	248	14%	128	10%	52%
Totals	216			1,772		1,278		
	12%	All Adherents				72%	All adherents	

already joined by 1851 or joined after the 1871 census. In addition to those who joined between 1866 and 1875, 119 Methodist adherents over the age of nine in 1871 joined within six and ten years of 1871, 89 joined in the 1850s, and 72 were already members in 1851. In sum, over the entire twenty year period--in terms of the probability of joining as opposed to the moment of joining, the younger adherents were least likely to join or to have joined the church.

³¹ I did not eliminate the few relations of itinerant clergy, since they involved only two wives (Elizabeth McKeown in 1861 and 1871; Ellen B. Smith in 1861, and her daughters who reportedly did join for the first time in Milltown. Richard Smith's wife, who appears on the 1871 census, was not listed as a church member in the membership list he prepared in his final year.

The association between youth and joining the church cannot be dismissed altogether, since because of the age distribution of the population as a whole, the young formed a prominent group though not the majority among new members. Analyzing age at first membership shows that of 497 new members, 41% were younger than 25 when they joined (only one was under 10), 31% were aged 25 to 39, 18% aged 40 to 54, and 10% aged 55 or over. The young were by no means excluded from lay leadership: 11 men and women who joined while aged 15 to 24 became either class leaders or officers of the Board between 1861 and 1881. The brief existence of the girls' meeting from the Sunday school and a parallel meeting of young men led by the minister explain why most of those who joined when young did so in St. Stephen, or in the other villages. It is also possible that rural meetings may have been more likely to have retained the older model of delayed or adult conversion. Perhaps for some young Methodists, a village class meeting was a more comfortable or interesting social situation than a rural one consisting mostly of their older relatives and neighbours.

One study of eighteenth and early nineteenth century Congregationalism concluded that those born "within the local church society's boundaries and who were children of members" converted before those born elsewhere, or whose

parents were not members".³² One can account in part for the older new members in St. Stephen by comparing the 151 known converts from other denominations with the 345 members listed only as Methodist adherents.³³ Although the historiography of the Second Great Awakening might suggest a search among this latter group for evidence of youthful rebellion against family religious ties,³⁴ new members from other denominations were a slightly older group, with lower proportions of those under 25 when they joined and higher proportions of those over 39. For many converts, joining the Methodist church was a further stage of the religious journey.

Another explanation for the older new members might have been their origins, if they had come from outside the parish where they could have joined a church earlier in their lives, or, to speculate on the reverse, where they might have delayed church membership because of their mobility. Given the greater propensity of British immigrant adherents to join the church, the former undoubtedly explains the patterns in the following table, which shows that of 62 British immigrant new members, 84% were aged 25 or over when

³² Grossbart, p. 731.

³³ As mentioned before, Methodist adherents listed as such in only one census could also have been converts.

³⁴ See for example Ryan, pp. 67 and 77.

they joined.

Table 10: New Members - Age at Joining						
BRITISH IMMIGRANTS			NORTH AMERICANS			TOTAL
	N	%IMM	1851-71	2 census yrs (N %AGE)	1 census	
9-14	1	2%	2 8%	11 46%	11 46%	24
15-24	9	14%	30 18%	86 51%	54 32%	170
25-39	20	32%	37 28%	38 29%	58 44%	133
40-54	16	26%	23 31%	33 46%	18 24%	74
55+	16	26%	12 36%	16 48%	5 15%	33
Total	62		104	184	146	434

One member with a known age had an illegible birthplace

Among the rest (434), those who joined when over 40 were in fact more likely to be longer residents of the parish, whereas those who joined when aged 25 to 39 were more likely to be recent arrivals (many of the rest were too young to have been in the parish in 1851).

The pattern of older first membership can be confirmed by analyzing known residents of the parish before they joined the Methodist church. Just over half of the 118 such residents who joined the church when aged 25 to 39 could have joined earlier. Of the 76 who joined when aged 40 to 54, almost two thirds could have joined while they were aged 25 to 39, and 12% even younger. Similarly, two thirds of the

37 who joined when over 54 could have joined while they were aged 40 to 54 (and two more could have joined even earlier). This in part reflects the relative dearth of revivals in the 1850s, but may also point to a different church experience for older birth cohorts. Without information on those who converted in the 1840s and 1850s and left the parish, one can only speculate whether proportionately more members within birth cohorts may have have joined at a younger age in the later decades, even if still a minority.

Although analyzing the marital status of members and adherents further demonstrates that church membership was a primarily adult behaviour, it also provides another illustration of the subtle influence of family on the timing of church membership. Like the Puritans, most Methodists who joined the church did so sometime after marriage, "when it came time to think of the spiritual welfare of children and when women in particular confronted the fear of dying in childbirth". Grossbart's study of later Congregationalism showed that before 1800 two thirds to three quarters of new members were married, but that revivals lowered these proportions to between 40% and 60%, a trend which grew in the next century.³⁵ Of new members since 1851, it was

³⁵ Moran, "'The Hidden Ones': Women and Religion in Puritan New England", in Triumph Over Silence: Women in Protestant History, ed. Richard L. Greaves (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985), p. 136; Grossbart, p. 706.

possible to establish the marital status at first membership for 562: 38% were single (of whom 15% married while members), 57% joined while married, and 5% were widowed. Although at first glance, the single seem a significant though not a majority group, the Table 11 comparing new members and never-member adherents shows that the single were the least likely to join or have joined the church.³⁶

Table 11: Methodist Adherents over 14 - Marital Status 1871

Marital Status	Methodist New Members 1866-75			Methodist New Members 1861-65, 76-81			Nevermember adherents 1851-81			All Adherents	
	N	%New	%MS	N	%New	%MS	N	%Nevm	%MS	N	%All
Single	61	33%	14%	15	18%	4%	347	52%	81%	428	42%
Married	108	59%	21%	65	78%	13%	270	41%	52%	519	51%
Widowed	15	8%	21%	3	4%	4%	38	6%	52%	73	7%
Other							4	1%	100%	4	-
Totals	184			83			659			1,024	
%Adher.	18%			8%			64%				

10% had joined before 1861.

³⁶ The best and most inclusive information on marital status is from the 1871 census, but on household status from the 1861 census. For Methodist adherents and members linked to the 1861 census, I assumed all individuals <16 were unmarried, and used daughters' last names, the occupation 'widow', information from the 1851 census, and from membership records to determine marital status.

Moreover, even among adherents over 24 in 1871, roughly one fifth of the single in every age group including even those over 54 had joined or would join the church between 1851 and 1881, as opposed to roughly half of the married. The widowed were also an important group, but their description belongs in the next chapter on gender.

Not only were younger adherents or single adherents of any age less likely to join the church, but those who did join tended to leave sooner than older or married members. However, membership turnover was so high that among all age groups the greatest difference was between those who joined when under 40 and those who joined when aged 40 or over. Since those who joined in the latter age group were overrepresented among those who were still members in 1881, they were underrepresented among those known to have ceased their membership or left the parish during these decades. One fifth of the 42 new members in this category who had joined when aged 40 or over left within two years, compared with 44% of the 140 who had joined when under 25, and 39% of those who had joined when aged 25 to 39. Those who joined when young were, not surprisingly, overrepresented among those known to have left the Society because they had left the parish, but the young were not disproportionately represented among those known to have simply ceased their membership while remaining within the

circuits.³⁷ Similarly, the single were less likely to remain as long in the church than the married, in part because so many were also young. Roughly half of the 137 single new members who had ceased their memberships or left the parish before 1881 did so within two years of joining, compared with only one third of 175 married new members.

In other words, although declension, migration, and mortality overtook all ages among new members, out-migration in particular combined with the greater tendency of older adherents to join the church produced older permanent memberships, and given the parish's out-migration perhaps older permanent congregations as well. As Table 12 below³⁸ shows, those under the age of 40 were always underrepresented, and those older overrepresented. The proportions of the former rose during revivals, and those of the latter in the lean years that followed. If most evangelical church growth drew on the greater staying power of older new members, than these shifting proportions explain why observers associated revivals with the young.

³⁷ The one exception was a class of Sunday school girls who met briefly as a class meeting, but were never counted as members. Most either left the parish, or joined as full members a few years after their class had ceased.

³⁸ Both circuits' membership records for 1862 are missing; the 1868 Milltown list is missing, and its reconstruction still significantly underestimates the new members in that revival year.

**Table 12: Yearly Membership with Known Ages over 14
(that year)**

Year	Age 15-24	%Year	Age 25-39	%Year	Age 40-54	%Year	Age 55+	%Year	Total
1860	20	15%	67	28%	41	31%	36	27%	134
1861	35	20%	45	26%	45	26%	49	28%	174
1863	14	10%	33	24%	42	31%	47	35%	136
1864	23	14%	43	26%	48	29%	51	31%	165
1865	13	9%	30	21%	47	33%	51	36%	141
1866	6	4%	32	24%	44	32%	54	40%	136
1867	6	4%	29	22%	41	31%	58	43%	134
1869	34	16%	41	19%	73	34%	64	30%	212
1870	35	15%	52	23%	71	31%	70	31%	228
1871	34	14%	60	25%	68	29%	76	32%	238
1872	33	13%	70	28%	64	26%	81	33%	248
1873	38	15%	76	29%	66	25%	79	31%	259
1874	50	17%	83	29%	74	26%	79	28%	286
1875	32	12%	79	31%	73	28%	73	28%	257

After 1875, the number of members linked to a census drops, producing larger proportions of older members.

All Methodist Adherents 1861 or 1871 >14 in 1871

Age 15-24	%All	Age 25-39	%All	Age 40-54	%All	Age 55+	%All	Total
453	30%	540	36%	266	18%	248	16%	1,507

Church membership is an imperfect surrogate for conversion, which as a distinct process could have had its own demography. As discussed in Chapter Two (p. 52), some joined the church seeking conversion and did not feel they had experienced it until later. Reports of revivals also show that not all who were converted joined the church. Examining the ages of those who chose to be

baptized as adults, which surely reflected an intense religious decision, more closely identifies converts and also shows the persistence of this strain of traditional piety. Most writers on the subject of baptism were primarily concerned with defending it in relation to children, rather than to adults. In the Maritime conferences at least, communicants in Methodist churches were not required to have been baptized. According to George O. Huestis, the ceremony of baptism itself was not necessary for salvation, although the motives of an individual who refused the rite might be questionable.³⁹ Revival reports from St. Stephen refer to adult baptisms as preceding the service for the reception of new members.

At least 70 individuals over the age of 14 were baptized during these years; unfortunately 13 "adults" baptized in 1869 were simply numbered and not named, and a few named baptized adults may have joined briefly in Milltown during the years with missing records. Nevertheless, virtually all those baptized between 1855 and 1881 whose names were known also joined the church, of whom five also became class leaders or Board officers (the Board also included one officer who had been baptized as an adult before 1855). Only 40 of the remaining 57 could be linked to a census return, of whom 15 were converts from other denominations. Not surprisingly, eight were Baptists. Two were

³⁹ TPW, 5 September 1874, p. 2 col. 3; 4 January 1865, p. 2 cols. 5-6.

Congregationalists, and one was a Universalist who had been a Methodist in 1861 and returned to the church in the 1874 revival; two were Presbyterians, and one was Anglican. One half of these 40 were aged 15 to 24 at their baptisms (compared with 41% of all church members who joined when in that age group), 11 were aged 25 to 39, five were aged 40 to 54, and four aged 55 or over. Seven of the 40 had been in Charlotte County since 1851, where they presumably could have been baptized at some point while children, had their families so wished it. The remainder were recent arrivals, including two British immigrants.

The varied timing of church membership supports the argument that church members joined by choice rather than social expectations, and the demonstrates the continuity of local Methodism with traditional Methodist piety. Since older members were more likely to remain in the parish and thus the Society, ministers may well have felt concern over their disproportionately aging class meetings and the implications for church growth. Moreover, as the next chapter will show, even in families where church membership was part of a Methodist youth, patterns of church involvement would differ sharply between men and women.

Chapter IX

The Demography of Church Growth (3): Gender

Although Duncan McColl shared with William Black in founding New Brunswick Methodism, their wives were remembered as leaders in their own right: "equally preeminent", their "conversation was always spiritual and beneficial to their sisters".¹ In the 1860s and 1870s, women constituted between two thirds and four fifths of class meetings in the parish of St. Stephen. Since these meetings formed the "nucleus of the church",² these women formed its demographic core. By the 1860s, moreover, nearly all identifiable church members from the McColls' era³ were women. Almost every Methodist Society included one or two of these few surviving members: Charlotte Hill Thompson in St. Stephen or Mary Whitney Hill in Milltown, and the daughters of Mehitable Getchell, the first Methodist convert in the

¹ Stephen Humbert, The Rise and Progress of Methodism in the Province of New Brunswick (Saint John: Lewis W. Durant, 1836), p. 28.

² George O. Huestis, A Manual of Methodism, p. 171.

³ That there were any at all can be explained by the large families and multiple marriages of St. Stephen's founders and the long tenure of the McColls within the parish.

parish. The older daughter, Mary Mitchell, attended the Old Ridge class until her death in 1876, outliving her younger sister Susanna Leeman in Barter Settlement. Although Susanna's husband was also a member, Mehitable Getchell's one surviving son in 1861 had either never joined or ceased to be a member by the first Milltown record of 1849.⁴

In a sense, women members were the chief 'repository' of Methodist piety, both local tradition, or in the case of women such as Ann Jane Robinson or Eliza Creighton, the religious tradition they brought with them as immigrants. Yet although women sustained church growth and reaffirmed this piety by their loyalty to its central institution, they were not the sole foundation of the church. Methodism reflected the dichotomy within many religious groups in the Christian tradition. Women were the majority of Methodist members, and were accorded greater ecclesiastical status within Wesleyanism than within any other major denomination in the region. Yet Wesleyan Methodism retained the exclusion of women from ordination or administration that sectarian Methodists had overcome elsewhere.⁵ The role of gender in local Methodism is thus summarized by the minister who

⁴ SCC, 28 October 1869, p. 2 col. 8; 9 October 1873, p. 2 col. 4; Knowlton, pp. 124 and 127; TPW, 4 February 1876, p. 46; SSRC; Getchell Family History.

⁵ Frederick A. Norwood, "Expanding Horizons: Women in the Methodist Movement," in Triumph Over Silence, pp. 151-172.

thanked the church's key supporters: the "Ladies and Officers of the Milltown Circuit".⁶ This chapter shows how male and female church involvement in Methodism differed in its type and timing over the life course. Although Methodism's appeal to women can be explained in part by cross-cultural theories of gender and religion, its origins were ideological and denominational. With a mission to evangelize all, Methodist writers both advocated the ideal--calling men and women to conversion--and validated the reality, through the Methodist version of "evangelical womanhood".⁷

According to one summary of current scholarship on nineteenth and twentieth century Europe, "the tendency for women to be more involved than men in the church applies both to towns and to rural areas, to Catholic and to Protestant countries, to the working classes and to the middle classes".⁸ Although impressionistic literary evidence also suggests that women outnumbered men within North American Catholic congregations,⁹ the pattern known as "feminization" is clearest in sectarian, Puritan, and

⁶ TPW, 16 August 1855, p. 2 col. 2.

⁷ Ann Boylan, "Evangelical Womanhood in the Nineteenth Century", Feminist Studies, 1978 4(3), pp. 62-80.

⁸ McLeod, p. 29.

⁹ McDannell, pp. 145-46.

evangelical traditions.¹⁰ The naming of this pattern as a process rather than as a social characteristic originated in studies of New England Puritanism. From the late seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, the sex parity of the founders of local churches was rapidly replaced by a trend towards higher proportions of women, though seldom higher than 80%.¹¹

Initial efforts to link this trend to the nineteenth century shift in the nature of New England Protestantism from Puritan to Evangelical and Liberal¹² have been qualified by this identification of predominantly female

¹⁰ Richard L. Greaves, "Foundation Builders: The Role of Women in Early English Nonconformity", in Triumph Over Silence, p. 76; Dorothy P. Ludlow, "Shaking Patriarchy's Foundations: Sectarian Women in England, 1641-1700", in Triumph Over Silence, pp. 108-09; Patricia U. Bonomi, Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 113.

¹¹ Moran, "'The Hidden Ones'", p. 133; Moran, "'Sisters in Christ': Women and the Church in Seventeenth Century New England", in Women in American Religion, ed. Janet Wilson James (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), pp. 48-53; Mary Maples Dunn, "Saints and Sisters: Congregational and Quaker Women in the Early Colonial Period", in James, p. 35; Cedric Cowing, "Sex and Preaching in the Great Awakening", American Quarterly, 20(Fall 1968), p. 625; Nancy F. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 132.

¹² Barbara Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion", in Clio's Consciousness Raised, ed. Mary Hartman and Lois Banner (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1973), pp. 137-55; Ann Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture (New York: Avon Books, 1977), pp. 114-20

memberships much earlier in the region. Nevertheless, the evangelicalism of the transatlantic Awakenings, particularly the Arminian strain, was more attractive and accessible to women than to men.¹³ The fewer and more tentative demographic studies of English Methodism show a pattern somewhat similar to that of early Puritanism, with slight female majorities among early Societies rising to nearly 70% in late eighteenth century towns. In an 1861 revival led by James Caughey, 68% of 1,800 converts from a local Free Methodist Church were female.¹⁴ One of the few demographic studies of early Canadian evangelicalism found that in the decade prior to a major revival in 1827, women outnumbered men three to one in the Baptist membership of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.¹⁵

In St. Stephen, girls and women made up only slight majorities of Sunday school students and adult baptisms. Despite the tremendous flux in numbers--98 to 323 students,

¹³ In addition to Norwood, see Martha Tomhave Blauvelt and Rosemary Skinner Keller, "Women and Revivalism: The Puritan and Wesleyan Traditions", in Women and Religion in America: The Colonial and Revolutionary Periods, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), pp. 316-328; Blauvelt, "Women and Revivalism", in Women and Religion in America: The Nineteenth Century, ed. Ruether and Keller (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), pp. 1-9.

¹⁴ Gail Malmgreen, Introd., Religion in the Lives of English Women, ed. Malmgreen (London: Croom Helm, 1986), pp. 9-10; Hempton, p. 13; Kent, p. 86.

¹⁵ Goodwin, p. 199.

and 17 to 46 teachers by the 1860s--girls and women consistently constituted roughly 55% of both between 1833 and 1869, when breakdowns by sex ceased. This contrasts with Anne Boylan's finding of predominantly female teachers in urban Sunday schools in New England.¹⁶ The relative balance of male and female students may reflect the force of family compulsion or the lack of rival entertainment, while the presence of male teachers may reflect the fact that teachers were not required to be church members. Overall, women made up only 55% of the 99 named adult baptisms between 1835 and 1883, but two thirds of those baptized after 1854. This may simply be a random pattern of such small numbers, but it might suggest the greater participation of men in earlier revivals.

In contrast, women consistently predominated in the church membership. Of 789 names appearing on the two circuits' records between 1860 and 1881, 68% were female, 31% male, and 1% were last names only. These proportions do not differ much from those of the 1840s and 1850s: of the membership of the St. Stephen circuit within the parish, 72% in 1840, 74% in 1843, and 69% in 1846 were women; of the membership of both circuits within the parish, 73% in 1849, 73% in 1852, and 75% in 1859 were women. The greater tendency of Methodist women to join the church is evident

¹⁶ NBDM, 1833-55; SJDM, 1856-69; Boylan, p. 66.

despite the slightly and only temporarily unbalanced sex ratios of Methodist adherents during the early 1860s. Of 831 adherents over the age of 14 living within the two circuits in 1861, 53% were women. Over one third of these women had been or would become church members between 1851 and 1871, compared to roughly one fifth of all Methodist men in this age group. In 1871, 44% of adherent women over the age of 14 were church members sometime between 1861 and 1881, compared to only 24% of Methodist men. However, once in the church, women did not demonstrate greater staying-power than men. Analyzing all members regardless of when they started or finished their memberships showed that one third of both men and women were gone within two years, 55% within five, and three fourths within ten years. Women were only slightly underrepresented among individuals who ceased their memberships while remaining in the parish, while men were slightly underrepresented among known removals, probably because as subsequent analysis will show, there were proportionately fewer young among the male members than among the female.

Although a single businessman such as Zechariah Chipman might be a major donor, in terms of ongoing effort Methodist women were the major fundraisers. Although no official records survive, reports in the Wesleyan and the Courier

suggest a variety of activities. Each chapel appears to have had a group of women from the membership or congregation who met as a "Sewing Circle" or "Domestic Missionary Society" or the "Wesleyan Church Aid Society".¹⁷ In addition to provisioning the parsonage, such groups held annual or semi-annual bazaars, dinners, and teas, raising between \$400 and \$500 at a time.¹⁸ When necessary, the "young ladies" imitated their seniors, raising more modest amounts to purchase books or music for the Sunday School.¹⁹ Starting in 1879, the women in St. Stephen itself held monthly "social teas" in the vestry, aimed both at attracting new supporters and raising money from the 25 cent admission.²⁰ Such activities appear to have been held more frequently in the St. Stephen church than in Milltown or Upper Mills, perhaps because the latter congregations were poorer, or perhaps simply because the St. Stephen church was rebuilt twice in

¹⁷ TPW, 21 February 1852, p. 2 col. 7; 16 August 1855, p. 2 col. 2; 15 May 1856, p. 2 cols. 5-6; SCC, 4 August 1868, p. 2 col. 5.

¹⁸ SCC, 15 October 1868, p. 2 col. 2; SCC, 7 October 1869, p. 3 col. 4; 21 October 1869, p. 2 col. 2; 15 December 1870, p. 2 col. 4; 12 October 1871, p. 2 col. 2; 19 October 1871, p. 2 col. 4; 26 December 1872, p. 2 col. 6; 13 March 1872, p. 2 col. 3; 9 October 1873, p. 2 col. 4; 12 August 1875, p. 2 col. 4; 21 December 1876, p. 2 col. 3; 4 December 1879, p. 2 col. 4;

¹⁹ SCC, 2 June 1870, p. 2 col. 4.

²⁰ SCC, 30 October 1879, p. 2 col. 5; 22 January 1880, p. 2 col. 3; 26 February 1880, p. 2 col. 4; 1 April 1880, p. 2 col. 4.

these decades. The fundraising that followed the fire in 1876 inspired lengthy praise in the Wesleyan from the outgoing minister. Jane Gibson, whose son's family had attended the Milltown church in the 1850s,²¹ commenced with a bazaar raising \$300, "other ladies connected with the congregation" held a tea meeting raising \$200, followed by another "fancy sale" and later an "oyster supper". The minister concluded: "For skill in planning, and for energy in executing plans for the good of the Church, the ladies in connection with the Methodist congregation in St. Stephen are rarely equalled and never excelled."²²

Yet although major fundraisers and the majority of members, women had only a nominal presence on the Quarterly Official Boards, constituting only one third of sometime class leaders between 1851 and 1881 (but closer proportions during the 1860s and 1870s). As explained in Chapter Three (p. 117), despite the theoretical presence of all class leaders on Quarterly Official Boards according to the Discipline, the women leaders were never listed as such, although they attended one meeting in 1874 to discuss and vote for church union. There were so few class leaders that

²¹ Mirroring the overall pattern of gender and church involvement, businessman Alexander Gibson was a major donor and a pewrenter, but only his wife and oldest daughter were members (his parents were members in St. David).

²² TPW, 18 January 1876, p. 13 cols. 3-4.

women leaders constituted only 1% of all women members between 1860 and 1881, whereas at least one quarter of male members were at some point on the circuits' Quarterly Official Boards. Since male lay leaders included 61% of all male members who lasted 15 years or more in the Society, the Milltown minister's summary of his key supporters as "Ladies and Officers" is not surprising.

The larger proportions of male converts during revival years noted by historians of the Awakenings²³ were not obviously paralleled in St. Stephen, in large part because there were relatively few nonrevival converts. Revivals in the village of St. Stephen brought in higher proportions of female converts, but as McKeown had observed, the Old Ridge revival of 1861 involved a higher proportion of men.²⁴ Between 1869 and 1873, revivals brought in much closer proportions of men and women in Milltown and Upper Mills, and in 1873 also in Getchell and Barter Settlements. As these patterns suggest, the proportion of male members varied more according to economic context. Although local proportions of men among all new members from 1860 to 1881 by their first and usually only class meeting never rose

²³ Mary P. Ryan, "A Women's Awakening: Evangelical Religion and the Families of Utica, New York, 1800-1840", in James, pp. 90-91; Richard D. Shiels, "The Feminization of American Congregationalism, 1730-1835", American Quarterly 33(1981), p. 57.

²⁴ TPW, 26 December 1860, p. 2 col. 4;

above 39%, the highest proportions were in Middle Landing, Upper Mills, and Getchell and Barter Settlements. An impressionistic scan of the occupations of the two circuits' male members suggests that the Society in the town of St. Stephen included more merchants, clerks, and artisan proprietors, while the Milltown circuit included more labourers, millmen, and lumbermen. The generally lower proportions of men in the former's class meetings thus support the clerical lament over "business men who aid the Church after the fashion of Noah's workmen, and like them, do not enter it."²⁵

Local variations in the leadership of class meetings may have been a result or a cause of these differing proportions of male members. Wesley had intended men and women to meet separately, but this proved impossible and unenforceable because of numbers and popular feeling.²⁶ In St. Stephen, the rural class meetings were mixed, but in the villages the numbers of women guaranteed that there was always at least one all female class led by the minister, his wife, or a female leader. The other ongoing class in the town of St. Stephen was mixed until 1866, when it became solely male with no recorded explanation. That it remained so may be

²⁵ TPW, 29 July 1881, p. 4 col. 2.

²⁶ Henry Abelow, "The Sexual Politics of Early Wesleyan Methodism", in Obelkevich, Roper, and Samuel, pp. 91-92; Watson, p. 94.

attributable to the example of Milltown, which had always had one all male class (as well as one mixed). Although one Curtis Settlement farmer was a former class leader and one steward very briefly led a class in town, throughout most of the 1860s and 1870s the only leaders in the St. Stephen circuit were women, those in Milltown only men. In addition to class leaders described in previous chapters, five men led class meetings at Upper Mills over the two decades. One never appeared on a Canadian census return and was probably a resident of Baring, while another, listed as a labourer in the 1851 provincial census, seems to have moved across the river by the mid 1860s and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church in Milltown, Maine. After the 1868 revival, three new members led Upper Mills class meetings: David Belyea, a millman; Rex M. King, a formerly Baptist surveyor and lumberman; and Edward Towers, a millwright. Briefly in the 1870s, Samuel Perkins--a "truckman" or "expressman"--led the Mohannas class. Some men may have found a lay-led class meeting in a home more inviting than one led in the church by an itinerant minister; others of course may have felt the reverse, accepting spiritual leadership from a clergyman but not from a mere neighbour.

With the transition in the parish's economy, commercial time discipline was a further obstacle to revivals and

evening church activities in towns, particularly for the predominantly male shopworkers. Methodist clergy and lay leaders therefore supported the early closing movement, and three Methodist and artisanal family businesses listed on an early supportive petition were owned by members. Although the movement repeatedly revived, it never succeeded within these decades, in part because its success depended on the entire cooperation of owners on both sides of the river.²⁷ Methodist involvement in the shortlived Young Men's Institute, which had supported the early closing movement, was part of the delayed clerical response to "feminization" expressed in the promotion of "muscular Christianity" in late nineteenth century England and America.²⁸ A Young Men's Christian Association (henceforth Y.M.C.A.) had existed briefly in St. Stephen in 1871 and 1872, and was revived again in 1875, with debate over whether it was to be primarily religious or literary. One supporter suggested that its original name had been unappealing, and that it should be revived as an institute for young and old, in which only the executive need be church members. A leading businessman reported that the young men absent from the

²⁷ SCC, 14 December 1876, p. 2 col. 4; 19 July 1867, p. 2 col. 1; 16 May 1872, p. 2 col. 7

²⁸ David I. McLeod, Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, Y.M.C.A., and Their Forerunners, 1870-1920 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), pp. 22-23, 42-45.

founding meeting had told him they would not go "if it was to be an association...for prayer meetings" of which "there were plenty". Another speaker summarized the resistance, indicting the evangelicalism associated with the Y.M.C.A.: he "would object to making it purely religious. They must have some intellectual exercise, and something to make it attractive."²⁹

Methodist clergy also made special efforts to appeal to the young men within their church, ranging from McKeown's special address to the "boys" at an 1859 Sunday school festival to the preannounced sermon he delivered at an evening service in 1870 to the "young men" of his congregation. He began by saying that he "looked with bright anticipation and hopes to the young men who will shortly fill the most important positions both in the State and in the Church." Moved by his acquaintance with "the young men of this town", he wished to counter the "many evil influences at work" around them. His sermon, entitled "The Road to True Greatness", called them to conversion, but in a self-affirming almost career oriented manner, exemplifying "muscular Christianity". McKeown contrasted the false greatness of the Napoleons or "any crowned head or Prime

²⁹ SCC, 28 July 1870, p. 2 col. 3; 22 June 1874, p. 2 col. 2; 23 November 1871, p. 2 col. 6; 4 January 1872, p. 2 col. 3; 21 January 1875, p. 2 col. 7; 11 February 1875, p. 2 col. 3.

Minister of Europe" with the greatness of: "True piety, not a noisy kind, not such as that of the cloister, but that which developed itself in acts of faith and charity".

Quoting the Westminster Confession, perhaps to attract any Presbyterian listeners, he exhorted:

Young men, aim at holy and useful lives, and then what a glorious future is before you....Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever, and there is no department of honest labour in which it cannot be done."³⁰

Clark also had apparently been especially concerned and popular with Methodist young men, and in 1873 formed a shortlived St. Stephen class almost entirely of new and young male members. At his departure, a group of young men, most of whom were "recent converts", presented him with a gift and "a very affectionate address". After Howard Sprague left the St. Stephen circuit in 1882, the Courier reported that "the young men of the community, in which he always took a warm interest, and in whose interests he has on many occasions sacrificed his own convenience, will greatly miss his kindly presence and encouraging example." In contrast, the only organized effort aimed at young women was the class meeting held during Clark's itinerancy of girls from the Sunday school. They ranged in age from seven to 16 and were led in turn by three women: milliner Janet Stevenson,

³⁰ TPW, 28 September 1859, p. 2 col. 3.; SCC, 28 July 1870, p. 2 col. 3; 4 August 1870, p. 2 col. 3.

Isabella Harrison, who with her husband had moved from St. Andrews by the early 1870s, and Dora Fraser, a young single woman from an old Methodist family at Old Ridge.³¹

The promotion of muscular Christianity was part of the new evangelical youth work of the late nineteenth century, whose ideological origins were recounted in the previous chapter. Clerical concerns about the small numbers of young people in church memberships were compounded by the underrepresentation of men, particularly young men. Some writers attributed this to the bad example of older men "whose whole practice seems to say to the youth growing up around them that the institutions of the Gospel are worthy of their support, but not really necessary to their personal salvation." As one minister wrote, all too many male hearers believed they could "enter heaven under the auspices" of others, a "parent", "wife" or "child".³² A gendered analysis of church membership as a demographic event, using both age and marital or household status, confirms that these ideological concerns reflected real differences in male and female church involvement.

³¹ SCC, 22 June 1874, p. 2 col. 2; 20 July 1882, p. 2 col. 4; SSMR, 1873-76.

³² TPW, 29 July 1881, p. 4 col. 1.

For Methodist women, membership might be part of any stage or all stages of the life course. As one minister wrote of Mary Mitchell: "Her confidence in God to the end was unbounded. He had been her refuge in youth, and in middle age, nor did he forsake her in old age".³³ As the following table shows, almost half of all female new members whose ages were known joined when they were under 25, 28% joined when they were aged 25 to 39, and roughly one fourth when older. In contrast, only 29% of male new members joined when they were under the age of 25, and almost three fourths joined when they were older, a pattern similar to that of New England Congregational churches.³⁴

	Men			Women			Total	
	N	%Men	%Age	N	%Women	%Age		
9-14	3	2%	12%	23	7%	88%	26	5%
15-24	45	27%	24%	134	41%	75%	179	36%
25-39	58	35%	38%	95	28%	62%	153	31%
40-54	37	22%	41%	53	16%	59%	90	18%
55+	24	14%	49%	25	8%	51%	49	10%
Total	167			330			497	

³³ TPW, 5 February 1876, p. 46 cols. 1-2.

³⁴ See for example Moran, "Conditions", p. 333; Greven, p. 126; and Grossbart, p. 706.

Among the oldest Methodist converts, the proportions of men and women were equal. With only 40 adult baptisms with known ages, their contrasting patterns may simply be random variations: 61% of the 18 men were baptized while aged 15 to 24, compared with only 43% of the women.

The different timing of male and female church membership was not just a matter of age, but also related to their family situation. Whereas single (182) and married (265) female adherents over the age of 14 in the 1871 census return joined or would join within five years in almost equal proportions (23% and 22%), only 8% of the 246 single male adherents joined during the same period, compared with 20% of the 254 married men. Adherents in this age group in 1871 who were never members between 1861 and 1881 constituted roughly nine tenths of single men, two thirds of single women, and only half of both married women and married men. Because of out-migration in the 1860s and the possible underlinkage of single women, this contrast was less pronounced among 1861 adherents, though still evident. Analysis of the information on household status in 1861 better confirms this contrast. As Table 14 below indicates for Methodist adherents over the age of 14 in 1861, daughters, wives, and household heads constituted most of new new members between 1861 and 1870.

Table 14: Methodist Adherents over 14 - Household Status 1861

Household Status	Methodist Ex-Members 1851-60			Methodist Members 1861-70			Nevermember adherents 1851-71			All Adherents	
	N	%Mem	%HH	N	%Mem	%HH	N	%Adh	%hh	N	%All
Mheads	10	33%	5%	52	24%	26%	139	24%	69%	201	24%
Sons				11	5%	8%	128	22%	92%	139	17%
Mrelative	1	3%	6%	3	1%	18%	13	2%	76%	17	2%
Wives	15	50%	8%	80	38%	41%	98	17%	51%	193	23%
Daught.	1	3%	1%	33	15%	24%	105	17%	75%	139	17%
Frelative	3	10%	6%	17	8%	35%	29	5%	59%	49	6%
Fheads				12	6%	36%	21	4%	64%	33	4%
Servants				1	1%	3%	29	5%	97%	30	4%
Other				4	2%	13%	26	4%	87%	30	4%
Totals	30			213			588			831	
		4% All			26% All			71% All			

After sons, the lowest membership rates were among servants or boarders, suggesting that if Methodist parents or household heads had only limited influence in persuading the relations they lived with to join the church, they had even less influence over those who lived outside, particularly in nonMethodist households. Similarly, among adherents over the age of 14 in 1871, roughly half of all wives (again of the household head), female heads, and women living as extended kin were members in the surrounding decades, compared with 39% of male household heads, 35% of daughters, and only 10% of sons.

In roughly two thirds of the one-member adherent families in census years, the member was married and most often the wife of the household head, while in two-member families, one half of those in 1861 and nine tenths of those in 1871 were represented at the class meeting by married couples. One can only tentatively relate the likelihood of a Methodist woman becoming a church member to the extent of her family responsibilities, for indeed some have argued that church membership was attractive as an escape from domestic drudgery. In 1871, only 84 households or 7% of the 1,128 of all denominations within the two circuits kept domestic servants, and only 4% of Methodist households kept servants. Although women with very young children were less likely to join the church, many did: of 74 adherent mothers between the ages of 15 and 39 in 1871 who were members between 1869 and 1873, 40% had children under the age of four, compared with 54% of mothers in that age group who never joined the church, and 56% of 18 who were members at other times. Estimating other domestic responsibilities is impossible without information about household productivity, but there were no differences between the sex ratios of the combined village or rural memberships.

Young or single Methodists were not the only demographic groups to demonstrate the contrasting experience of men and

women. Demographers and historians have shown that women are more likely to become or to remain widowed. This was also true for Methodist women in St. Stephen, but the contrast was heightened by the greater tendency of women to join the church. In 1871, 15% of Methodist women over 24 were widowed,³⁵ compared to 5% of Methodist men; in 1861, where male marital status was not always clear, the comparable proportions were 16% and 2%. These patterns resemble those of other religious groups in 1871, although slightly larger proportions of Anglicans and Catholics were widowed. The demographic characteristics of older Methodist women in St. Stephen were typical of the period, closely resembling those found in other studies.³⁶ In 1861, 58% of Methodist widows over the age of 24 were household heads, 33% lived with other family members, and 8% were boarders or servants; in 1871, 60% of Methodist widows constituted 92% of 39 female household heads (distinguishing relatives from boarders was more difficult).

Among women adherents, the widowed joined the church in the same proportion as the married. In 1871, 58% of the 57 Methodist widows had joined the church sometime between 1851 and 1881, compared with only two of the 16 Methodist

³⁵ One Methodist widow in 1871 was under 25.

³⁶ Chudacoff and Hareven, "Family Transitions into Old Age", pp. 224-25.

widowers in 1871. Combining census and anecdotal information shows that 48 members were widowed at the time they joined the church (of whom seven remarried). Of these, only three identifiable widowers joined the Methodist church between 1855 and 1881: William Thompson--the son of McColl converts, and two newcomers. Church and burial records suggest that Alexander Nicholson, a 37 year old Presbyterian born in Scotland, may have joined the St. Stephen church by the spring of 1870 in response to the death of his wife in the previous December, perhaps also prompted by McKeown's small revival. The third widower, like Nicholson a labourer, was a Nova Scotian Methodist who joined the Upper Mills class after baptism in the 1869 revival. While in the case of Nicholson, church membership was probably an immediate response to the death of a spouse, others such as Jane Wilder and Mary Pineo--both Methodist adherents--joined the church two or three years after being widowed.³⁷

The widow of independent means was often an important figure in early English Methodism because of the financial support she could provide. Margaret Magwood may have played such a role for the St. Stephen circuit. She came from Ireland in 1817 to St. James and had become a Methodist member there by the first extant records of 1849. She moved to St. Stephen in 1851 shortly after her husband's death,

³⁷ SSMR; MTMR; SSRC.

and eventually bequeathed all her property to the Methodist Conference, which used it to "help liquidate debts on connexional property in Charlotte County". Magwood may also have been independent in lifestyle and conviction, for she appeared as a household head without servants or dependents in St. James in 1851 and in St. Stephen in 1861, although the former census included a large family of Irish Magwoods who had arrived in the 1830s. In the latter census, she identified herself as an Anglican, despite her continuous Methodist membership.³⁸ Many widowed members came from adherent families, but Magwood was not alone in her dual affiliation. Abigail Myles had joined the Milltown church around 1850, remaining a member until her death, probably in 1868. In 1861 she lived with her daughter's family, all--like her--adherents of the Church of Scotland.

Both male and female Methodists represented idiosyncratic experiences of denominational identification which cannot be homogenized under the the heading of demographic patterns. Nevertheless, the timing of church membership was far more varied among women than among men. For St. Stephen's Methodist women, joining the church might be part of any stage of the life course--from youth to widowhood, whereas for most male church members it was part of married life.

³⁸ Malmgreen, "Domestic Discords", pp. 56-58; Charlotte County Probate Records, 1851, Volume D; SJDM, 1862.

Patterns of kinship among male and female church members further demonstrate this point. Of the 772 church members between 1861 and 1881 who were not members of ministers' families, 160 appeared to be the sole member of their families to join the church. Only 31 or 13% of the 243 men were found in this group, compared with 125 or 24% of the 523 women (another six were designated only by initials or last names). Information about marital or household status was only available for 106 of the 160, and because of occasional titles such as 'Miss' or 'Mrs' this information was more available for the women. Of the 15 men in this latter category, ten were husbands, and five were single. Of the 91 women who could be classified, 22 were single, 40 were married when they joined, 16 were widowed, and the remainder were either married or widowed. It is difficult to explain this group of 160, but their very lack of records indicates that they were either more transient or from the American side of the river. They may also have included more widows, but of course some apparently 'sole' members survived relations who had been members before 1860. The new members since 1851 with known genders consisted of 224 men and 469 women. However, only 13% of the former joined by themselves compared with one fourth of the women. Almost equal proportions of men and women (31% and 28%) followed or

preceded another relation into the church, but 56% of the men compared with 47% of the women joined the same year as another relation.

Other studies have identified "the disproportionate tendency of men to enter the church accompanied, or preceded, by females".³⁹ Because the family relationships of all Methodist church members between 1860 and 1881 were complicated and multi-generational, and of course represented families with earlier church members, it is difficult to identify the first converts within a family. Of 118 family groupings within the membership between 1860 and 1881, 29 consisted only of two relations; of this latter group, only 16 pairs consisted of a man and a woman, in seven pairs the man joined first, in nine the woman. Another nine larger groupings were same sex, chiefly women. In another 32 family groupings, a male/female couple were the earliest church members, and in 33 women were the earliest members. In only 15 was the earliest member male.

Similarly, of 412 married church members, 117 wives were never joined by their husbands compared with only 24 husbands. The remaining 271 individuals made up 132

³⁹ Moran, "Religion and Family in Milford", p. 250 and p. 253; Johnson, pp. 98-99 and 108; Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class, pp. 80-81. The participation of men in Finneyite revivals in Utica differed from that described here, however, in that Ryan found that the majority of males linked to other records were not household heads.

'families', nearly all onetime couples but including a few recombinations as a result of remarriage. In exactly half (67), the couples joined the church together, in 39 the wife joined before the husband, and in 26 the husband joined before his wife. Surviving Methodist marriage records from this period suggest several patterns in the timing of church membership and marriage. At least eight couples joined in the first year of marriage, nine women and one man joined the years before or after, and two women and two men followed already member spouses into the church at marriage. Most who did not join together or at marriage joined within 15 years of their spouses, but some delayed church membership into their old age. An English immigrant labourer joined the church in the 1878 revival, 20 years after his wife, and only a few years before her death.

The theology of Christian nurture implied an important role for women in sustaining Methodism within the family, and patterns of church membership clearly show women as the most common leaders of the family to the class meeting, or even their sole representatives. In a few non-Methodist families, the mother was also the first or the only Methodist. Eliza Jane Whittemore, the Congregationalist wife of an Anglican, was baptized in 1880, joining the Upper Mills class meeting. In another family, Elmira Edwards Pine,

the Presbyterian wife of an Anglican, joined the Methodist church in the 1878 revival. But although it seems probable that women more than men maintained the Methodist tradition over the long run, this is impossible to prove conclusively. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, not all known surviving McColl converts were still church members by 1861. Mary Milbery had ceased attending class, probably because of infirmity, although the records show a number of women classified as sick or aged but still counted as members, presumably because they insisted. Milbery's obituary noted that she lived to see the fourth generation, "many of them respected and useful members of the Church of Christ". Moreover, the female role as the ideal or actual perpetuator of the faith was by no mean exclusively Methodist. Dugald Blair, a St. Stephen doctor, was described as "evangelical" rather than denominational, and often attended Methodist services. His widow and children were Anglicans in 1861, but he had come from a Presbyterian home in Scotland. There he had been "carefully instructed by a pious mother in the grand rudiments of religion, and though in a far off land that same good mother did not forget her son, for many were the epistles to him, and more the prayers." Despite a moral life, Blair did not feel the assurance of a changed soul until his last illness, when he told the Methodist minister:

"My mother's prayers...are answered."⁴⁰

In the absence of sources on the inner motivation of most Methodist women, explaining their attraction to Methodism is a necessarily tentative undertaking. Despite the predominance of women in church membership, there were many similarly religious men, other religious behaviours, and even more men and women outside the church altogether. Nevertheless, Methodism's appeal to women in St. Stephen can be explained in part by cross-cultural theories of gender and religion. When Puritan writers argued that the fear or experience of suffering and death in childbirth and childraising--rather than any innate personality differences--made women more religious, they touched on a key anthropological explanation of female religiosity.⁴¹ Yet as suggested earlier, this explanation could also account for the greater participation of married men in church membership. A broader hypothesis contends that women's sexual biology made them more aware of the fragility of life, more prone to introspection and to sensing the supernatural or transcendent.⁴² Although historians and

⁴⁰ TPW, 22 May 1867, p. 2 col. 1; 17 April 1856, p. 2 cols. 1-2.

⁴¹ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "'Vertuous Women Found': New England Ministerial Literature 1668-1735", in James, pp. 86-87; Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood, pp. 146-47.

⁴² Margaret Conrad, "'Recording Angels': The Private Chronicles of Women from the Maritime Provinces of

psychologists may quarrel over whether women are innately more relational or affective than men,⁴³ women have been accustomed to cooperative, nurturing, and conflict-resolving roles, and thus can identify more with the religious life. Comparing the Catholic bourgeois of Lille with Welsh Methodist miners' wives, Hugh McLeod has argued that the church's preoccupation with personal rather than social morality was more relevant to women's lives as mothers and neighbours than to men's as workers or employers. Related to this was the clerical argument that women's lives were more protected from the temptations of greed and power that led to irreligion.⁴⁴ The most compelling explanation of the greater participation of women in religious activities has been the greater absorption of men into and exclusion of women from political life in its broadest sense: from the social worlds of unstructured labour unrest to the fraternal organization or the political process.

Canada, 1780-1950", in Vol. 2 of The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985, p. 46; Rosemary Ball, "'A Perfect Farmer's Wife': Women in Nineteenth Century Rural Ontario", Canada: A Historical Magazine, (December, 1975), p. 15; Deborah Valenze, Prophetic Sons and Daughters: Female Preaching and Popular Religion in Industrial England (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 39.

⁴³ Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis", American Historical Review, 91(1986), p. 1065.

⁴⁴ McLeod, pp. 31-32; Cott, p. 136; Cowing, p. 629.

However, women's involvement in churches has obviously ideological origins as well, in the Christian tradition itself. The roots of both patriarchy and sexual equality can be found in the New Testament. Religious women and their apologists have also cited the charismatic tradition as justifying or allowing special forms or expressions of faith. The mid to late seventeenth century shift in English Protestantism from the belief in the naturally carnal woman to the virtuous and religious woman, from the temptress to the redemptress, followed similar beliefs in early confessors' manuals.⁴⁵ Certainly by the late eighteenth century, many lay and clerical writers, particularly evangelicals, believed that by nature as well as nurture women were more religious than men.

This became part of a larger set of ideas expressed in a proliferation of private and public writings for or about women. Fostered by the dualism and emotionalism of Romanticism, these ideas reworked the longstanding ideology of 'separate spheres' of life for men and women. When these ideas were concentrated among or aimed at urban middle-class

⁴⁵ This paragraph and those that follow summarize themes common to sources cited earlier, as well as Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin, "Women's Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions: Continuity and Change", Introd. to Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), pp. 19-20; Blauvelt and Skinner, p. 318-19; Bonomi, p. 111.

women of New England, historians dubbed them the 'cult of domesticity', although Deborah Valenze has identified some parallels with the domestic ideology of English Methodism. Explanations of womens' participation in nineteenth century revivals have been linked to this ideology and to the so-called "feminization" of New England print culture from Calvinist, intellectually systematic, and elite to evangelical or Liberal, sentimental, and popular. The changes in Protestant ideas about childhood described earlier added greater emphasis to women's special role.⁴⁶ At the same time, Liberalism helped transform sexual equality and moral perfectionism from an "eschatalogical" to an "historical" possibility, fuelling both women's demands for actual power within ecclesiastical structures and women's participation in reform movements.⁴⁷ However, urban middle-class women were increasingly excluded--at least prescriptively--from the economic world except as consumers, from the tavern, and from popular entertainments. Only the religious world remained, socially sanctioned as especially female and important by religious culture, or deemed

⁴⁶ Welter, Douglas, and Cott represent the most thorough expositions of this interpretive scheme, but see also Barbara Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelicalism, and Temperance in Nineteenth Century America (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1981), pp. 64 and 83-85.

⁴⁷ Ruether and McDonald, pp. 24-25.

ultimately unimportant by a secular culture, and seemingly safely relegated to women.⁴⁸

Historians who have focused on the Second Great Awakening have been naturally tempted to relate women's involvement to contemporary social changes. However, the strength of overly contextual explanations of women's church involvement is obviously limited by the fact that much of the behaviour or ideology they describe predate the circumstances said to explain them. Moreover, the differing responses by women to revivals over larger regions and time periods underline the difficulties of relating religion and the ideology of separate spheres to economic and social changes at a local level. In other words, while such general changes may have stimulated or encouraged the exposition of this ideology by writers or preachers, it does not necessarily follow that women responded similarly, according to their own economic situations. For example, in an interpretation of the social and religious developments of certain New York towns, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg has argued that different socioeconomic groups, particularly female, were attracted to antiritualism and antistructuralism because they experienced the most social dislocation and transformation. This interpretation founders when transformed into causation and expanded to include the region as a whole, since it depends

⁴⁸ Cott, pp. 137-41; Dunn, p. 35; Welter, pp.138-39.

on the effect of enthusiasm on non-evangelical churches, the feminization of relatively young congregations, and the temporal association of one revival cycle with a specific period of social change.⁴⁹ Reiterating the cross-cultural association of religion and social distress, Deborah Valenze has argued that working-class women in early industrializing England used the cottage religion of sectarian Methodism to both adapt to and challenge their dislocation from traditional economies. Ryan's study of several decades of revivals in Utica made a similar argument for New England youth, but also showed that two revival inspired groups had very different constituencies. The Female Missionary Society consisted mainly of leisured urban and middle class women, released from the drudgery of their grandmothers's lives, but also dispossessed of their former economic powers. The Maternal Association, however, included mainly artisans' wives still very much involved in the domestic economy.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Cross and the Pedestal: Women, Anti-Ritualism, and the Emergence of the American Bourgeoisie", in Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 129-164. This is a revised version of an earlier article published in Leonard Sweet, The Evangelical Tradition in America, (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1984), which also contains Nancy Hewitt's article applying the interpretation to Rochester: "The Perimeters of Women's Power in American Religion", pp. 233-256.

⁵⁰ Valenze, pp. 121-23; Cott, p. 136, Ryan, pp. 102, 85, 91.

The adoption of popular religious culture by local churches with their own social contexts can be seen in the history of the small Maternal Association of Milltown. Active in the 1830s and 1840s, it followed the model of its Utica founders and used the latter's literature. The Association's origins coincided with the Methodist revival of 1835, initially both involving the Methodist minister or his wife and using Methodist as well as nondenominational materials. It appears to have ceased for a few years, and revived about the time of the Methodist schism and the creation of the Congregationalist Church into which most of the Association's socially elite mothers went. Not surprisingly, no Wesleyan Methodist minister or his wife and almost no Methodist women were ever involved after the schism; instead, the Association drew occasionally on the services of the Maine Methodist Episcopal minister, and even the minister of the Baptist church in Calais.⁵¹

Within this broader Protestant ideology concerning women and religion, evangelicalism had a special appeal to women, whether in the gentle and intimate Christ of evangelical conversion or because of the abandonment of the belief in the possibility of infant damnation.⁵² Yet since women in

⁵¹ Minutes, Maternal Association of Milltown, 1835-49, PANB; Parish of St. Stephen, 1851 manuscript census return; Knowlton, pp. 39, 64, and 81.

⁵² Welter, p. 139; Valenze, pp. 21-22; Moran, "Sisters in

St. Stephen had many denominational choices, the most compelling explanations of their attraction to Methodism lie in the denomination itself. Methodism attracted women because it located the church both in the chapel and in the home, where women had the most economic and psychological power. In doing this, Methodism recreated both the house churches of early English sectarianism and, as defenders of the class meeting stressed, those of New Testament times. Although Valenze has interpreted the phrase "mother in Israel" as reflecting a distinctively sectarian Methodist ideology, it was generally used in Methodist literature, particularly with reference to the pioneer converts. An impressionistic survey of the Wesleyan confirms that Valenze was probably correct in stressing the absence of a widely used parallel for men, but both the expressions "mother in Israel" and "father in Israel" were used in two St. Stephen obituaries of the early 1850s.⁵³ More importantly, the Methodist version of 'evangelical womanhood' expanded women's 'sphere' to include leadership, and offered women a unique place for community and voice.

Christ", pp. 53-54.

⁵³ Valenze, p. 36; Cooney, p. 88, Robert Wilson, Never Give Up, p. 109; TPW, 14 February 1852, p. 2 col. 6; 8 July 1858, p. 1 col. 7.

Robert Cooney's 1854 address to a "Ladies' Tea Meeting" in St. Stephen exemplified this. He argued that the "influence of woman--as daughters and as sisters, and then as wives and as mothers" upon "the destiny of the world" was "incalculable":

To them..belonged the formation of the character of every human being...at least during the first years...this was their sacred responsibility--this their exalted honour...who are those who move the great springs of every benevolent institution formed for the relief of the wretched and miserable...who visits the schools, the hospital, the hovel, and the prison, and becomes conversant with misery in all her disgusting forms.. Who protect (sic) every weakness and alleviate every suffering from the cry of the infant...to the decrepitude of old age? The answer was woman...she it is who attends us in sickness, who soothes us in care, who consoles us in calamity.

Cooney concluded by describing particular women: the heroines of the Bible; evangelical writers; and lastly "some who are now living and exerting their influence for the good of society, the Church, and world." Two other ministers spoke on the same subject, and all three were reportedly received by both men and women in the audience with "marked attention and evident satisfaction". Perhaps reflecting both the Methodist tradition of adult engagement in salvation and moral perfectionism, Cooney qualified the extent of maternal influence, and expanded the domestic vision to include the larger world, reiterating the rationale for women's involvement in social reform.⁵⁴

Two later and contrasting views of women's sphere in Maritime Methodism convey the tension within the ideal of 'evangelical womanhood'. After citing Biblical women and the biographies of early Methodists, one Newfoundland minister argued in 1872 that "the world will not be evangelized without...female help", but help narrowly defined:

Attending Bible classes, class meetings, reading the scriptures to the poor, teaching in the Sabbath School, visiting the sick, tract distribution, collecting for missions and every good work...holy mothers training their children for the services of Christianity and the moral renovation of the world.

Presumably oblivious to the inherent contradiction between the virtues of "heroic zeal" and "Christian meekness", he advocated "Female Lay Agency to a certain extent". In contrast, Alexander Nicholson, the editor of the Wesleyan from 1873 to 1879, advocated the reestablishment of women preachers in Maritime Methodism. He correctly anticipated the judgement of historians that sacerdotalism and the professionalization of the ministry had crowded them out, along with their lay male counterparts. Nicholson compared the gradual and as yet unachieved emancipation of "woman" to that of "the Jew, the Roman Catholic, and the coloured Race", and wrote that "Woman's position in the Church, (sic) is a form of bondage, which has come down to us through the cruel dark ages, during which the strong held mastery over

⁵⁴ TPW, 26 January 1854, p. 2 cols. 3-5.

the weak". Criticizing the citation of isolated and misinterpreted Scripture against women, he claimed that John Wesley "had placed woman in her proper sphere in the Church, recognizing her perfect equality with the other sex...according to her the rights of office as a Leader".⁵⁵

Although no St. Stephen women were described as preachers during the 1860s and 1870s, three itinerant English women came to St. Stephen, part of what Olive Anderson has identified as a second wave of primarily middleclass evangelists and reformers. The "Miss Armstrong" described as a "popular and talented English lecturer" was probably J. L. Armstrong, who had begun preaching in Scotland and in 1866 published a pamphlet entitled A Plea for Modern Prophetesses. Soon after, she followed Catharine Booth in London, but with less success. In financial difficulties, by 1868 she was advertising for preaching invitations anywhere in Great Britain or America. With surprisingly no comment, the Courier noted that Armstrong would lecture on "Reforms and Reformers", preach in the Methodist Church in St. Stephen at both morning and evening services, and on another day give a temperance lecture. A report of one English tour

⁵⁵ TPW, 11 September 1872, p. 4 col. 1-3; 10 November 1877, p. 4 cols. 1-2; 1 June 1878, p. 4 cols. 1-2; Ruether and MacLaughlin, p. 27; Nancy Hardesty, Lucille Sider Dayton, and Donald W. Dayton, "Women in the Holiness Movement: Feminism in the Evangelical Tradition", in Ruether and Mclaughlin, p. 249; Valenze, p. 277-79.

suggests that she habitually divided her services into exegesis followed by direct evangelism.⁵⁶ "Misses Logan and Baird" had toured New Brunswick for several months in 1878 before responding to an invitation from the local W.C.T.U. Evans, the St. Stephen circuit minister, had opened their first service, and their meetings were held afternoon and evening for over a week, with reportedly "overflowing" audiences. According to rumour, the two women were wealthy; although offered a fee, they had declined, preferring "to preach the Gospel for free".⁵⁷

According to Nicholson, "except in the seclusion of the class-meeting, there are but rare instances of female co-operation in our public services now a days." Cooney's description of a Milltown prayer meeting in the 1850s may imply, albeit with regret, the primary role of women: "The prayer meeting this evening was a very profitable one. If we had a few praying men, and a few efficient leaders, great good might be done." In fact, women who led class meetings of both sexes in the rural areas, such as Ann Jane Robinson in Barter Settlement during the 1850s, functioned as leaders

⁵⁶ SCC, 28 January 1875, p. 2 col. 5; 4 February 1875, p. 2 col. 3; Olive Anderson, "Women Preachers in Mid-Victorian Britain: Some Reflexions on Feminism, Popular Religion and Social Change", Historical Journal, 1969, p. 472.

⁵⁷ SCC, 12 February 1879, p. 2 col. 3; 19 February 1879, p. 2 col. 3; The New Brunswick Reporter and Fredericton Advertiser, 22 January 1879, p. 3 col. 1; Minutes, St. Stephen W.C.T.U.

of prayer meetings as well as spiritual advisers. Nancy Murchie, the wife of a steward and a granddaughter of Mehitable Getchell, was the Old Ridge class leader after 1872. In town, Eliza Creighton was also a "prominent worker" at prayer meetings. Although ministers' wives led the St. Stephen village classes in the 1860s, most of these local women were recruited in the early 1870s. They also included the three women who took turns leading the girls' class, and two more lasting leaders: Lydia Veazy, the circuit steward's wife, and Phebe Tobin, an elderly widow whose father had been a Methodist minister.⁵⁸ To repeat an earlier point, Methodism suffered from a chronic shortage of class leaders both male and female. Perhaps women were deterred by the larger cultural pressure against such a role, perhaps in circuits like Milltown by the existence of male class leaders.

Outside the class meeting, Methodist men had other choices for ideological or affective community, belonging to quasi-religious fraternal associations such as the Orange Order⁵⁹ or even the Free Masons. By the late nineteenth century, Methodism's original prohibition against the latter had been overcome, and in St. Stephen it had never existed.

⁵⁸ Cooney, p. 174; Getchell Family History; SCC, 26 September 1879, p. 5 col. 4; Tobin Family History.

⁵⁹ SCC, 17 December 1873, p. 2 col. 2; 31 December 1874, p. 2 col. 3.

McColl had been the chaplain to the first lodge,⁶⁰ and by the 1870s adherents, members, and even class leaders belonged to the four village lodges.⁶¹ In contrast, class meetings led by local women or a minister's wife represented a unique form of intimate same-sex community that was more than domestic or neighbourly.⁶² Historians have used New England letters, diaries, and literature to explore the powerful and affectionate sisterhood of many nineteenth century women.⁶³ Unfortunately, there is no comparable and specifically Methodist evidence for St. Stephen women, but two sources point to the possibility of such a sisterhood outside the more elite world of New England literaria. One comes from the obituary of two clearly evangelical but probably Presbyterian widows in neighbouring St. James. Margaret Campbell was "eminent for her deep experimental

⁶⁰ Wilson, Methodism in the Maritime Provinces, p. 12; Harry Edgar Lamb, The History of St. Croix Lodge, No. 46, F.A.M. 1809-1934 (Calais, Me.: Advertiser Press, 1934), pp. 9 and 53;

⁶¹ SCC, 28 June 1867, p. 2 col. 2; 1 October 1868, p. 2 col. 5; 22 October 1868, p. 2 col. 4; 31 December 1874, p. 2 col. 5; 14 January 1875, p. 2 col. 5.

⁶² The Quakers also incorporated sub-groups of women led by women, but there were very few Quakers in New Brunswick.

⁶³ Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America", in Disorderly Conduct, pp. 53-76; Irene Quenzler Brown, "Death, Friendship, and Female Identity During New England's Second Great Awakening", Journal of Family History, (1976), pp. 367-87.

piety", "deeply interested in the success of the gospel, and energetic and cheerful in all works of faith, and labours of love for the benefit of families, the church and the whole community." Campbell's death occurred five days after Janet McLeod's:

She was a devoted follower of Jesus, along with Mrs. C., wrestling for the prosperity of Zion, and upholding the hands of their minister. Their friendship continued unbroken for upwards of 40 years, sweetened by communion with God. During many of these years, they met with all possible regularity, once a fortnight for mutual prayer. They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not long divided, and now they reunite forever in the society and communion of heaven.

An 1879 address to the St. Stephen W.C.T.U. demonstrates the role of such "communion" in encouraging activism. Miss Barbara Woodcock told the meeting that "for years she had been unable to speak above a whisper, but owing to the influence of prayer she had regained her voice", and was now able to encourage them "to persevere in their good work". After her address, the meeting read letters to the St. Stephen union from women in several other North American communities, "advocating...earnest and united prayer".⁶⁴

After the 1878 revival, the W.C.T.U. became the first major associational rival for the time of Methodist women. At its first meeting, 138 women signed up, more than had

⁶⁴ SCC, 16 December 1865, p. 2 col. 7; Minutes, St. Stephen W.C.T.U., 25 April 1879.

ever joined a church at one time since the 1830s. By November 1879, there were 331 W.C.T.U. members, of whom only 8½ were current Methodist church members, and 4½ past church members. Estimating the adherence of all W.C.T.U. members is impossible without the 1881 census, but an impressionistic survey suggests the sizeable presence of other religious groups, particularly Congregationalists, but also the daughters or sisters of Methodist members. Apart from holding meetings and fundraising, the Union supported the Boys' Club, provided relief to "destitute" women or families, and invited prominent speakers, such as Letitia Youmans, the national president. Their fusion of politics and religion was evident in decisions to raise money to help bring voters to the polls and to hold two long public prayer meetings on election day "with a change of leaders every hour".⁶⁵

After 1881, Methodism generated its own rival to the class meeting in the Women's Missionary Societies. The founders of the Society in St. Stephen included church members, but some were only adherents. The career of one founding member--Myra Abbie Veazy--exemplified the way local Methodism was poised between two eras of piety and women's activism. The daughter of John and Lydia Veazy--circuit

⁶⁵ Minutes, St. Stephen W.C.T.U., 29 January 1878 - 11 October 1881.

steward and class leader, she had been a member of the girl's class, and was converted in the 1878 revival. As a school teacher, she worked for the Methodist Home Mission Board in Florida from 1886 to 1891, and as a missionary in Japan from 1892 to 1919.⁶⁶

If women generally made up the majority of Methodist church members, the eventual decline of the class meeting may have reflected not just Methodist piety, but also women's increasing participation in rival organizations. If this is so, it demonstrates the difference between executive power and strength. In St. Stephen, women sustained church growth, and through contributions as church members and fundraisers supported the church. In comparison with lay men, they lacked only the executive power to distribute the money. But when women withdrew their strength as church members or fundraisers, the churches must surely have faltered. Just as historians of early Methodism have debated whether it promoted or hindered radicalism, others have asked the same question of evangelicalism and feminism. The answer is clearly equivocal.⁶⁷ On the one hand, Methodism defined and thus confined women to special roles, limiting their full participation in the church or in the

⁶⁶ Ellen Gregg, Kirk-McColl 1785 to 1980 (St. Stephen, N.B.: Print'N Press, c. 1981), pp. 92-93 and 149-50.

⁶⁷ Cott, pp. 197-206; Blauvelt, "Women and Revivalism", p. 9.

world. But on the other hand, the Methodist women who thronged to trans-Atlantic reform movements and would eventually demand ecclesiastical suffrage and ordination⁶⁸ demonstrate how women used their religion to step outside these roles and challenge these limitations. The ironic place of women's 'voice' in local Methodism is exemplified by its protection and cultivation in class or prayer meetings, and yet its historical survival largely in posthumous 'spiritual histories', whose relation to the tradition of 'holy dying' the last chapter will elaborate. By the 1880s, Methodism was no longer alone in offering women opportunities for feminine community, the enjoyment of power as leaders, or the exertion of power for social change. But with its early provision for female leaders of class meetings, prayer meetings, and in some branches also preaching services, Methodism was unique among evangelical churches.

⁶⁸ Ruth Compton Brouwer, "The Canadian Methodist Church and Ecclesiastical Suffrage for Women, 1902-1914", Canadian Methodist Historical Papers, 2(1977), pp. 1-27.

Chapter X
Spiritual History and 'Holy Dying' in Local
Methodism

Of course we have no arithmetic by which to reckon the countless multitude gathered to the heavenly country through Methodist instrumentality.¹

The English Protestant 'spiritual history' originated in Puritan testimonies given before church membership. Seldom published, they survived mainly in church or clerical records, sometimes in autobiographical pamphlets. The Methodist genre originated with Wesley's publication of religious obituaries in the early issues of the Arminian Magazine. These he introduced by explaining that "nothing is more animating to serious people than the dying words and behaviour of the children of God".² The Protestant substitute for the last rites--both the ideal and actual ritual of 'holy dying'--was part of the centuries old tradition of familiar or 'tame' death (to use Philippe Aries's now classic term). Nevertheless, subtle changes had occurred within this tradition by the late eighteenth

¹ Stephen Huestis, p. 103.

² Cited in Earl Kent Brown, Women of Mr. Wesley's Methodism (New York: The Edwin Mellon Press, 1983), p. 112.

century, both theological-- concerning the nature of God, salvation, and the afterlife--and change more profane but as profound in effect, the improvement in pain control through opiates. Two shifts in the culture of 'holy dying' relate to nineteenth century evangelicalism. The first involved the move from dying as the final test of fortitude to dying as a peaceful transition--from death as the "enemy" to death as "gentle friend". The second shift was the displacement of clergy by family as the central figures around the dying. These conclusions obviously represent only directions of cultural change. Very traditional dying persists still and in some ways has been revived through the hospice and 'death with dignity' movements, while so called 'modern' dying could be found very early.

The "Victorian celebration of death" and its parallel within antebellum American culture pose a dilemma for historical thanatologists. On the one hand, many aspects of the prevalent but not omnipresent concealment or denial of death in twentieth century North America originated in the nineteenth century culture of death. But as some British historians have argued, the evangelical deathbed may have sustained or even revived the older tradition of 'holy dying'.³ This historical debate centers on the presence and

³ This paragraph draws on Ralph Houlbrooke, Introd. to Death, Ritual, and Bereavement ed. Ralph Houlbrooke (London: Routledge, 1989), particularly the following

significance of the sacred and the secular, the traditional and the novel in the popular culture of dying. Among St. Stephen Methodists, published spiritual histories by their very nature present the most local evidence of this culture, but Methodist involvement in the rural cemetery movement and Methodist hymnody were also important. Determining how long the 'spiritual history' survived in Methodist journalism would require surveying the Wesleyan to the end of the century; even earlier, some clergy were more sympathetic to the genre than others. One conference address in 1868 referred to the "many delightful dying testimonies" of the previous year, but the Wesleyan editor in 1877 (of a younger generation) wrote that "Any Christian who cannot be sufficiently described in one third of a column must be altogether extraordinary".⁴ Yet as this chapter will show, the survival of the genre, bound up as it was with the

essays: Houlbrooke's "Death, Church, and Family in England Between the Late Fifteenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries", Lucinda McCray Beier, "The Good Death in Seventeenth-Century England", p. 45; Roy Porter, "Death and the Doctors in Georgian England", pp. 85-86 and 93. See also, David E. Stannard, The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture, and Social Change (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), Chapters 4 and 7. Although a short article by R. Cecil, "Holy Dying: Evangelical Attitudes to Death", in History Today (August 1982, pp. 30-34) is not that useful, it does establish that the evangelical deathbed ritual was going strong well before full-blown romanticism and the Victorian celebration of death.

⁴ EBAC, 1868; TPW, 24 March 1877, p. 4 col. 4.

centuries old tradition of 'holy dying', demonstrates the persistence of traditional Methodist piety.

English Methodist obituaries have formed key sources for historians, though seldom for their theological or psychological content.⁵ Although historians of Canadian Methodism have examined the changing nature of denominational piety, none appear to have used the spiritual histories of ordinary laity. In contrast, American historians have studied both conversion narratives and published spiritual histories. But uprooted like their subjects from their British heritage, many have cast the discussion solely in relation to Puritanism and the social and political history of early America, missing the cultural connection with trans-Atlantic evangelicalism.⁶ Although religious obituaries remain an underused source, they have obvious limitations, particularly when confined to a small segment of Maritime Methodism. Only 50 religious obituaries of local Methodists or their relations were published between 1851 and the 1881 (all but one in the Wesleyan), and few were very detailed. These 27 women and 23 men in no way encompass local Methodism, but surveying obituaries from

⁵ Brown, pp. 111-13; Obelkevich, Valenze, and Werner all use obituaries published in Methodist magazines.

⁶ In addition to Rabinowitz and Epstein, see Susan Juster, "'In a Different Voice': Male and Female Narratives of Religious Conversion in Post-Revolutionary America", American Quarterly, 41(1989), pp. 34-62.

elsewhere in the region suggests that the genre itself is better represented.⁷ Although local obituaries did not necessarily describe prominent Methodists, they nearly always described church members or their relations. The single most important factor explaining who were memorialized may have been whether the current minister generally liked to write: many obituaries were written by Robert Cooney in the 1850s or William Wilson in the mid 1860s--both of whom published books with the Methodist press.

Distinguishing the voices of laity, clergy, and religious convention is both difficult and ahistorical, since subjects and authors communicated through the acknowledged or implicit language of their religious culture. Sometimes the Wesleyan spared the modern scholar by distinguishing biblical or hymnal allusions, but more often not. One weakness in the historiography of nineteenth century religious experience is that it tends to overemphasize

⁷ The numbers were even smaller before the inclusion of a few detailed obituaries from St. David or the Ledge and a number from the 1850s, most of which involved the parents or siblings of later church members in St. Stephen. I also included the obituary of Charles Wilson who died in Nova Scotia, because his sister, present at his deathbed, later converted in Milltown, and because the obituary itself was rich in detail. No St. Stephen obituaries appeared in the Wesleyan between 1877 and 1884, the last year of our university library's holdings. The genre continued during these years, with fewer but lengthier memorials.

certain themes as peculiar to or especially explained by contemporary circumstances, rather than as common to not only trans-atlantic evangelicalism, but also the historic Christian or even cross-cultural religious language. Identifying all strands of this language used in local obituaries would require a separate study, but a few examples can convey the problem. The phrase "meek and quiet spirit" used of Methodist women comes not from the domestic ideology of the early nineteenth century, but from that similar ideology of the first century: I Peter 3. Two rewordings of Old Testament phrases resonate with historical overtones. Psalm 68's description of God as the judge or protector of the widow sometimes became 'the husband of the widow', probably an adaptation of God's consolation to Israel in Isaiah 54, which was also used to console Methodist widows: "For thy maker will be thy husband". Although this use of language embodies the personalized, familial God of the evangelicals, it also represents the ancient tradition of the feminine Israel, church, or soul, and the historic social insecurity of widows. Methodist obituaries also used the language of early English romanticism, transforming, for example, a phrase in Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" into "the

even, noiseless tenor of her way".⁸

Unlike the conversion narrative, these Methodist spiritual histories were shorter and more focused on their subjects' post-conversion lives, and even more on their deaths. The elements of the death bed ritual recounted in these histories parallel those found in other contemporary families, both fictional and real.⁹ Descriptions of suffering or the grief of the bereaved were shaped by those two paradoxical themes of traditional Christian orthodoxy: patient submission to the will of God and at the same time comfort and consolation from God, often expressed through the person of Jesus. Of these sentiments, Ann Jane Robinson's was the most biblically symbolic: "I am as clay in the hands of the potter". Eliza Keith, who joined the church in 1853, experienced tremendous cancer pain before her death in 1866:

Often did she tell the writer of the grace which her Heavenly Father continued to vouchsafe to her; 'but for which', said she 'under my indescribable sufferings I should sink into despair, but he is present with me, and I can rejoice in his salvation.'

⁸ TPW, 27 January 1853, p. 2 col. 2; 28 November 1874, p. 2 col. 4; 16 October 1867, p. 2 col. 1.

⁹ Lewis O. Saum, "Death in the Popular Mind of Pre-Civil War America", in Death in America ed. David. E. Stannard, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), pp. 41-45; A. Gregory Schneider, "The Ritual of Happy Dying Among Early American Methodists", Church History, (1987), pp. 359-62.

Mary Young told a friend: "'Jesus is precious. He has been with me in many trials....Blessed be His holy name, even now, He smooths my pillow and gives me rest'". When "asked by her mother, If Christ was precious now?" Mary Gibson Boyd replied, untroubled by exclusive language, "'O yes, I feel him lifting up my head for as the body perishes the inner man is strengthened.'"¹⁰

The memorials frequently used the image of pilgrimage to describe their subjects' lives, but their theodicy was confined to the orthodox explanation of adversity or suffering as spiritual trials designed to lead the believer closer to God, strengthen faith, or prepare the soul for heaven. Only one obituary identified death as its subject's frequent concern before her illness:

Of a meditative cast of mind, Mary's thoughts were often occupied with the most solemn themes. Even in the silent hours of the night, she would remain awake, thinking of death. The good Spirit of God was thus preparing her mind for early removal.

This theodicy was also the theme of a lyric spiritual history written by one convert herself: Celia Smith's poem "No Cross, No Crown", among the last she wrote.¹¹

¹⁰ In addition to obituaries cited in Chapter One, see "William Mabee", TPW, 14 February 1852, p. 2 col. 6; "Sarah Perkins", 3 March 1859, p. 2 col. 2; "Eliza Keith", TPW, 28 February 1866, p. 2 col. 5; "Mary Boyd", TPW, 15 December 1869, p. 1 col. 7.

¹¹ "Mary Ann Gibson", TPW, 16 October 1867, p. 2 col. 1; 10 September 1862, p. 2 col. 1.

The previously unconverted were particularly useful to memorialists, who hoped to both inspire and reassure the living. Mary Gibson Boyd had been "deeply impressed with the necessity of a change of heart and life, while attending the sick-bed and funeral of a near and much esteemed neighbour". Soon after she fell ill, sought and achieved conversion, which she shared with "pleasing testimonies". Sometime before her death in 1874, Mary Lamson told her minister: "'Read what you know is suitable for a seeker; for I am seeking salvation--a preparation for heaven'....She afterwards said 'I am prepared to die, I am going to Jesus.'" Some such as Hugh Yumlen sought conversion in the initial stages of long illnesses; others were converted only shortly before their deaths. For those who died suddenly, Methodist memorialists seem to have settled for Arminian optimism and assumed the safety of their subjects' souls.¹²

The Halliday family are an intriguing example of both the power of the death bed ritual outside literary creations for the Wesleyan and the disparate response within families to church membership. Eliza Halliday joined in the St. Stephen revival the same spring that two of her three young adult daughters died on the same day. Neither were ever

¹² "Dugald Blair", TPW, 17 April 1856, p. 2 cols. 1-2; "Ebenezer Gitchell", TPW, 3 March 1859, p. 2 col. 2; The short obituaries of Hugh Yumlen, Samuel Thomas, Adam Galespie, James McComb, Henry Eastman, and unnamed children come from TPW, 14 February 1852, p. 2 col. 6.

memorialized, but according to church records one daughter-- Jessie Halliday--was baptized only two days before her death was announced in the Courier; no other baptisms were listed for that month. Without information as to the nature of their illnesses, whether they were ever baptized as children, or the private beliefs of each member, one cannot even begin to imagine the psychological complexity of this family. Eliza Halliday remained a member throughout the decade; she was never joined by either her trader/merchant husband or her youngest daughter (although the latter may not have remained in the parish).¹³

In the spiritual history, the deathbed could also be an occasion for reaffirming the conversion experience, ideally with calmness and confidence. The deathbed concerns of Edward Towers, class leader and millwright, illustrate the the emphasis within evangelicalism on 'usefulness', which Rabinowitz relates to the moralist 'economy' of religious experience that originated in the Second Great Awakening:¹⁴

'I would it were my Father's will (that I) stay longer; not to pursue my worldly avocation, but to do more good for the Church and His cause than I have done...I have no fear--all is right. I know whom I have believed. His will is mine.'

¹³ SCC, 26 March 1874, p. 3 col. 1.

¹⁴ "William Thompson", SCC, 9 October 1873, p. 2 col. 4; "Edward Towers", TPW, 28 November 1874, p. 1 cols. 3-4; Rabinowitz, p. 104.

A few were more mere inchoate: Orissa King who died of typhoid showed nonetheless "in her rational moments...that she had a firm faith in a living Redeemer". On her deathbed, Ann Jane Robinson actually instructed her minister to preach her funeral sermon on Paul's famous lines from 2 Timothy, 4:

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

That the first British Wesleyan missionaries remarked on the local custom of preaching a sermon at funerals, even those of infants, may hint at differences between the British and American Methodist cultures of dying. Funeral sermons had become increasingly important in England after the Reformation, but given their preeminence in New England Puritanism, one can speculate that perhaps that tradition was the source of the regional practice.¹⁵

For some, their illnesses and their preoccupation with correct religious experience produced anxiety or even fear about the authenticity of their conversions. The memorialists naturally cited other causes, chiefly "the devil", and always reassured the readers that inner peace

¹⁵ SJDM, 1826; Houlbrooke, "Death, Church, and Family", p. 37.

eventually triumphed. Although these few accounts most resemble the older Puritan deathbed crisis, their interpreters were very much nineteenth century Methodists: they described what they saw as confusion or the temptation to abandon trust, not the final proof of election. Once Charlotte Hussey had passed through repeated stages of self-doubt and despair, she remained in a state of joy until her death, exclaiming: "I am in ecstasy...Jesus is unspeakably precious to me....I really did not imagine I could enjoy so much happiness this side of the grave." ¹⁶ Throughout his last illness, Robert Hitchings--who unlike Hussey died after a long life-- "wanted all who came to see him to pray with him and praise God on his account"; he was "the happiest man on his death bed" that his minister had ever seen. His daughter, who died the same day, "just before her death...broke out in praising God, and died happy in her Saviour's love".¹⁷ Some memorialists strained to interpret the last moments of their subjects: just before her death in 1869, Mary Boyd said "'Lord Jesus receive my spirit'", and from her joyful "countenance" at death the writer concluded that "she endeavoured to exclaim victory! victory! but the dissolving tabernacle could only utter

¹⁶ "Henry Hennigar", TPW, 19 April 1855, p. 2 col. 2; "Sarah Robinson", cited in Chapter One; "Charlotte Hussey", 26 August 1852, p. 2 col. 1.

¹⁷ "Ann Hitchings", 8 July 1858, p. 1 col. 7.

'vic'--'vic'".

Samuel Hall's obituary in the Wesleyan was both a tribute to the power Methodism could still hold even for those who had left it, and to the willingness of memorialists to ignore substantial denominational or theological differences. Hall had left the Milltown Methodist church in the schism and joined the Congregationalists. By 1861, he and his wife were Universalists, but since he lived in Mohannas he may still have attended occasional Methodist preaching services, and his name appears on an 1863 contributions list. During his last illness, he requested the Methodist minister to visit him. Although in great suffering from mouth cancer:

In patience he possessed his soul. These visits appeared to remind him of his former connection with the Methodist church, and especially of his conversion to God. He spoke with much feeling of the time when alone in the woods, he found the Lord, and of his present hope of being forever with him to behold his glory.

In many ways, a Universalist could simply be an optimistic Methodist, believing not just that all could be saved but that all ultimately would. Perhaps one could say that Samuel Hall lived and died with the churches of his choice.

These responses, whether calm, turmoil, joy or simply hopefulness-- were elicited by the presence of clergy, family, or friends. One particular female friend with

Hussey at her death reassured her: "'you'll soon fall asleep on the bosom of Jesus'". In response to a remark by a "Christian friend", that Lydia Walker "was now passing through the valley", Walker replied "'yes--but Jesus is with me'". Other deathbeds were more crowded: Sarah Crocker "bade her weeping family and friends farewell"; James Hannah even insisted that the prayer meeting be held in his room on the night he died.¹⁸ Just as family and friends were to console or reassure the dying convert, he or she was to caution and inspire the living. Some who died in the 1850s were explicitly concerned over the future conversion of their near relations, particularly their children, and whether they would meet them in heaven. John Kelso, badly burned in a housefire, urged his family to love one another and seek salvation.¹⁹ Unfortunately, there are not enough local obituaries to confirm the impression that this kind of explicit concern diminished in later decades.

Annie McCool, who died of consumption in 1874, apparently inspired rather than alarmed those around her:

Jesus was very precious to her soul and she loved to say so....the outflow of the sweet suffusion of his love and hope in the soul, strengthened the

¹⁸ In addition to obituaries already cited, "Lydia Walker", TPW, 14 April 1853, p. 4 col. 1; "Sarah Crocker", 14 February 1852, p. 2 col. 6.

¹⁹ In addition to the obituaries of William Mitchell, James Hannah, Robert Hitchings, and Charles Wilson cited earlier, "John Kelso", 19 November 1857, p. 2 col. 2.

religious trust of fellow Christians beholding,
and filled with wonder her youthful visitors.

"When questioned as to her family interests, if she had anything to say previous to her departure", Mary Boyd replied "'nothing to say, only live to Christ'". According to Rebecca Robinson Cleland's memorializer, her last turmoil was not over her spiritual state or her departure from worldly comforts, but "a struggle with her affection for her husband, from whom it seemed so hard to part" (she had no children of her own). Nevertheless, she declared her "trust in the atonement...peace with God, and hope of entering into rest, together with words of affectionate counsel to those around her deathbed."

Family separation at death and reunion in afterlife had become increasingly important themes in nineteenth century Protestant and Catholic print or material culture. Eighteenth century writers such as John Wesley had insisted on a theocentric, spiritual heaven without any "sensual, physical experience...and social interactions". The remarks of two St. Stephen Methodist ministers exemplify the contrasting nineteenth century clerical language that could describe heaven. McKeown clearly stood in the theocentric and in fact less biblically literal tradition of Wesley. In a sermon delivered at the dedication of the newly rebuilt St. Stephen church, McKeown deprecated the efforts of an

otherwise "able minister" to deduce the exact nature of heaven from Revelations. McKeown further ridiculed the nineteenth century best sellers of Elizabeth Stuart Phelps which, in the words of later historians, described "heavenly society consisting of Victorian families and celebrities all living in a picturesque natural setting". In McKeown's judgment: "To describe Heaven is to belittle it. The word of God is more philosophical". Writing an obituary, James Taylor used language much closer to popular culture, referring to "the palm-waving, the service, and the song of the beautiful land of rest". Although the theocentric view dominated clerical thought, some have argued that in popular print culture, "meeting one's departed family in heaven became a more pressing concern than union with God".²⁰

According to the voices in local spiritual histories, to be in Heaven was to be forever free from suffering and to "be with Jesus".²¹ Some converts such as Mary Ann Gibson expressed this as "I am going home", or in the words of her grandfather: "'I have a home not made with hands, eternal in the heavens'".²² One cannot read a domestic heaven into

²⁰ Colleen McDannell and Bernard Lang, Heaven: A History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 225, 228, 258, 266; TPW, 12 October 1870, p. 1 col. 6; 28 November 1874, p. 1 col. 4.

²¹ See for example the obituaries of Charlotte Hussey, William Mabee, Hannah Albee, Ann Jane Robinson, Sarah Perkins.

such phrases by themselves, for they involve older Christian traditions of pilgrimage and wandering. Some Methodists, however, were more specific, hoping to be reunited with family and friends, even particular individuals. Mary Young may have been referring to her class meeting when she said "I have a good hope, through grace, that I shall soon be permitted to join again with those, in whose society I have taken sweet counsel." Those "dear to" Mary Lamson were expected to "meet her" in Heaven. One minister noted the joy that Duncan McColl must have experienced as so many of his "spiritual children" joined him in "heavenly worship". In a poem written about Charles Wilson's death, one of his sisters (who eventually converted while in Milltown) wrote of his future happiness in meeting his baby, who had died the previous summer, both now "Safe from the storms of earth, its weariness and pain--Forever Home".²³

This poem exemplifies the "literary, in some part actual, magnification of mourning in America between 1820 and 1875".²⁴ Elements of the local Methodist culture of dying in

²² "John Gibson", TPW, 27 August 1880, p. 6 col. 2.

²³ TPW, 13 May 1858, p. 1 col. 1; "To My Brother in Heaven", TPW, 31 December 1857, p. 2 col. 1; See the obituaries of Mary Young, Mary Lamson, Robert Hitchings, Ann Hitchings, and William Mitchell.

²⁴ Douglas, p. 456; See also a memorial to Dugald Blair, TPW, 17 April 1856, p. 2 cols. 1-2.

many ways mirrored popular culture, but there were critical differences. Although Robert Wilson's semiautobiographical novel included the stock scene where the death of an already converted young child led the parents to conversion,²⁵ the only local parallel to such literary memorials were religious obituaries on the deaths of young women, the difference between the sentimentalism of the fictional genre and the older tradition of 'holy dying'. Similarly, two responses to the St. Stephen Rural Cemetery show how Methodism could adopt popular culture for very traditional purposes.

The rural cemetery movement originated in Massachusetts during the 1830s, in part a practical response to overcrowded church graveyards and concerns about hygiene. However, historians have argued that the landscaping and funerary art of the new cemeteries were--like obituaries or literary memorials--part of this magnification of mourning. By paradoxically camouflaging death for the emotional stimulation and implicit entertainment of the living, the cemeteries became new places of "resort". A Universalist minister's history of the St. Stephen rural cemetery exemplifies this. After deciding that traditional burial practice "seemed to perpetuate neglected, forlorn and repulsive looking grave-yards", a group of prominent men

²⁵ Wilson, Never Give Up, p. 31.

bought 65 acres on the outskirts of the village of St. Stephen, a location with a reputedly excellent view of the river. In 1856, they "enclosed it for a 'City of the Dead'.

Much good taste is displayed in the selection of this site and the arrangement of the grounds. Two miles of avenue and path wind through the neatly trimmed trees. Skilfully chiseled marble and granite tell where the dear departed repose.

Most of the organizers were not evangelicals: the group consisted of three Universalists, two Congregationalists, two Anglicans, one Presbyterian, and one Catholic, but also two Methodist church members (Zechariah Chipman and Timothy Crocker). The marblecutter and caretaker was an English immigrant, also a Methodist church member.²⁶

In the cemetery's first year, the Methodist minister capitalized on the idea of "excursion", drawing on the whole principle behind spiritual histories: the didactic and inspirational power of mortality. According to his biographer, William Smithson's sermons, "though not remarkable for enchanting displays of rhetoric...or profound intellectual thought, were rich in experimental and practical ideas". Smithson's fortnightly Sunday afternoon services in the cemetery were a novelty, and a reporter from the St. Stephen Patriot described his first effort as a

²⁶ Douglas, pp. 249-53; see also Stannard, The Puritan Way of Death, Chapter 7; Knowlton, pp. 120-21. The 1861 St. Stephen census provides the denominations of the organizers listed in Knowlton and identifies Samuel Almond as the marblecutter.

spectacular sight.

The Preacher on an elevated platform, the vergreen Pine gently waving its boughs above him, and an immense concourse of human beings of both sexes, and all ages....It was an hour, never to be forgotten. Some twelve or thirteen hundred persons, apparently with deep reverence listening...many from Calais, Milltown, and from various parts; some came many miles....The road outside the grounds was literally closed with covered carriages and wagons.²⁷

"Lines Suggested by a visit to the St. Stephen Cemetery" was probably written by Mary B. Smith, who--like her sister Celia--converted in an 1861 Milltown revival led by their father. While her poem remains obviously theocentric, it also uses elements from the popular culture of death described by Douglas, in romantic descriptions of nature and the cemetery as a place of excursion.

And these low graves, when summer roses twine,
And soft airs wander freighted with the breath
Of dewy violets and fair buds which shine,
Brightening like stars the gloomy night of death;
These are their graves--here sweetly sleep they all;
Never to wake till the great angel call.

...

Oft as we visit this lone realm of death,
Oft as our feet along its paths shall stray,
Oft as our bitter tears and choking breath
Shall tell of joys now yielded to decay,
We'll plant still brighter flowers above the tomb,
As brighter emblems of immortal bloom.

²⁷ George O. Huestis, Memorials, p. 146; TPW, 2 October 1856, p. 2 col. 6. The Patriot is one of the many New Brunswick newspapers of the previous century whose contents largely survived only in other serials.

In other verses, the poem recreates the moment of 'holy dying' for the reader--"the soothing power,/ The sacred feeling of that hallowed hour".²⁸

Historians have also interpreted the increasing focus of American hymnody on heaven as part of the cultural "magnification" of mourning²⁹ and a gradual shift in the emphasis of hymn language from themes of doctrine to themes of wandering and refuge.³⁰ Methodist hymnody was a central part of Methodist worship both in the chapel and in the home.³¹ Most of the hymns quoted in religious obituaries were chosen by the writer for the reader, but a few were actually used by the dying or those around them. Charles Wilson died in the company of his wife, four children, one sister, and his mother-in-law. His obituary cites three different hymns by the Wesleys.

²⁸ TPW, 3 September 1862, p. 1 col. 3. "Lines" was signed "M.B.S." of St. Andrews and William Smith's family was in St. Andrews at this time.

²⁹ Douglas, p. 261-62; Sandra Sizer, Gospel Hymns and Social Religion (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), pp. 30-33.

³⁰ Conceding that part of this shift occurred between Watts and the Wesleys--well before Moody and Sanky and their historical context, Sizer argues that hymn compilers and singers used earlier hymns that seemed to address their current situations and were less likely to use those that did not (p. 128).

³¹ Dearing, p. 79.

A short time before the vital spark escaped, he wished those who surrounded his bed to sing, and as they lingered, with a voice almost lost in death he led in singing the beautiful lines:

Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these array'd
With joy shall I lift up my head.

After a few moments he again led in singing:

He breaks the power of cancell'd sin
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.

And several times with deep feeling repeated the last lines. Earnest prayer was then offered....After which, while all in the room were moved to tears, he exerted his remaining strength by singing, in broken accents, two verses of that delightful hymn, commencing: Arise my soul, arise--Shake off the guilty fears.³²

William Mitchell told his minister (the writer of his obituary):

'I know in whom I have believed. My feet are upon the rock--I have no fear of death. "The pain of life will soon be o'er, The anguish and distracting care."' Oh yes, I replied, and then you will rest in heaven "Where sighing grief shall weep no more, And sin shall never enter there!"

Lydia Walker's friend consoled her by literally appropriating and revising a Charles Wesley hymn to form the lines: "Almost ended is the glorious strife, death is swallowed up of life". Hymns were often used to memorialize the dead, and not just by Methodists. The family of an

³² Most but not all of the hymns cited in these spiritual histories were in the Methodist Hymn Book, (Toronto: Methodist Book and Publishing House, 1882).

Anglican granddaughter of McColl converts published "The Hour of my Departure's Come" in the Courier as embodying her "dying sentiments".³³

Unfortunately, local spiritual histories give only two specific examples of hymns used in the day to day spiritual life of Methodists. The lines from another Charles Wesley hymn that James Hannah often repeated in his class meeting were given in his obituary:

Forever here my rest shall be
Close to the bleeding side,
This all my hope and all my plea,
For me the Saviour died.

George Milbery had converted in a New Brunswick Methodist revival in the late 1830s, but moved to Maine in 1857: "the morning of the day of his death, he read a portion of Scripture and sang his favourite hymn "Lord in the morning thou shalt hear'".³⁴ Not surprisingly, the St. Stephen Methodist choir added Moody and Sanky's Gospel Songs to their repertoire, soon after its publication in 1875. Gospel Songs included many Wesleyan classics, but also the newer favourites from such writers as the prolific Fanny Crosby.

³³ In addition to already cited obituaries, SCC, 27 November 1867, p. 3 col. 1.

³⁴ "George Milbery", TPW, 27 November 1872, p. 4 col. 3. This hymn is not in the 1884 Methodist hymn book, but is in the mid 1850s American Vocalist (Boston: Brown, Taggart and Chase), with a traditional modal and fugal tune, a total contrast with the general style of Gospel Songs.

The collection was part of the armory of the local temperance movement, which presumed their popularity, urging in one announcement all "those having copies...to bring them". A Moody and Sanky concert given at the Young Men's Institute included seven mid to late nineteenth century "gospel songs", but finished with the perennially favourite Charles Wesley hymn "Jesus Lover of My Soul".³⁵

Eva Thompson died over twenty years later than Charlotte Hussey, but their spiritual histories exemplify both the continuity and subtle changes in ideal and actual 'holy dying'. Both used hymns; not surprisingly the one hymn they shared was "Jesus Lover of My Soul". Both were single young women, Hussey adopted into the family of a class meeting leader, Thompson the daughter of two members. Hussey's obituary dated her conversion, and discussed her protracted relapses into despair and doubt before her final "triumph" and "consolation". Eva Thompson never formally joined the church, and her obituary made no explicit reference to conversion. Her commitments as church organist and Sunday school teacher may easily explain why she never found the time to attend class meeting, and her obituary's nonconcern with the issue show that local Methodism was not legalistic. When "hope of her recovery was abandoned", Eva Thompson

³⁵ SCC, 20 November 1878, p. 2 col. 3; 28 February 1877, p. 2 col. 5.

said: "'I have been asking God to prepare me, for whatever is his will concerning me.'" From then on, "it was both pleasing and profitable to converse with her on the ground of her hope, and of her future prospect".

Both obituaries detailed their subjects' last remarks. Whether through disease, personality, or cultural context, Hussey's "outpourings" were more fervent: "'Jesus--Jesus; I'll soon be with him--I'll see him as he is. O the love of God--how great--my soul is full.'" She was described as "faintly reciting these words-- 'Precious precious sleep from which none ever wake to weep'". These expressions used hymn lines such as "When I see Thee as Thou Art" or "Asleep in Jesus! Blessed sleep/from which none ever wake to weep". In her final moments she "often and fervently uttered 'Save into the haven guide, O receive my soul at last!'" and later "'With faith I plunge me in the sea, Here is my hope, my joy, my rest.'"

Eva Thompson's deathbed was calmer, but more musical. Through her unusually authentic voice, the account so demonstrates the significance of 'holy dying' for some families that it is worth quoting at length.

How sweet were the words of comfort she addressed to the sorrowing family as she requested them not to weep for her, but to meet her in heaven. Several times during the day she asked those who stood around her bed to sing, "Jesus comforts me", "Come sing to me of Heaven". And when the voices of her brother and sister, joined that of the

father in singing that sweet melody, "My heavenly home is bright and fair", she joined with them as they sang, "I am going home to die no more".

This mid-century William Hunter hymn partly reflects the popular culture of heaven, but retains a theocentric and sectarian streak that would be foreign to a secular and popular vision of heaven as a superior earth.

My heavenly home is bright and fair,
Nor pain nor death can enter there,
Its glittering towers the sun outshine;
That heavenly mansion shall be mine.

...

My father's house is built on high,
Far, far above the starry sky;
When from this earthly prison free,
That heavenly mansion mine shall be.

...

Then fail the earth, let stars decline,
And sun and moon refuse to shine,
All nature sink and cease to be,
That heavenly mansion stands for me.

Eva Thompson then asked those around her to sing "Jesu lover of my soul", after which she said:

'Pa, I will soon get my voice again'.... About her last utterances were, 'I will soon be home', 'there is a crown and a harp for me'. Her mother...says Eva do you see me; she replied, yes ma, but you are a great way off, and in a few moments her happy spirit took its flight from this world of sickness, pain and death.

So firm was this interpretation of the evangelical deathbed that the writer may never have suspected that Eva Thompson's hope of singing once more may have been more than anticipation of heaven, but rather the classic pre-death

rally of the terminally ill. Even the best of Methodists may have wished to praise God on earth a little longer.³⁶

These spiritual histories combined with local revival accounts suggest that Methodists sought and, to some extent, achieved what has been described as a "community of feeling" in the church, class meeting, or at the deathbed.³⁷ The complexity of the reality--in which the ideal was undoubtedly dimmed by divisions of personality and social class--is conveyed by the differing appellations of Methodists within local records: shortened firstnames, initials, Mr. or Mrs. (in fairness, often courtesy titles for older members) or Miss, even still Sister or Brother. But the latter expressions would disappear from the records in the next decade. The ideal is evident in the Wesleyan's description of the proper results of a successful revival: "homes would be gladdened, brows relieved of their wrinkles of care, streams of iniquity stayed...courts of litigation spared their acrimonious disputes". The emphasis on community appears in a report on an 1883 revival in Milltown: "there seemed also a disposition to reconcile differences--to forgive each other".³⁸ One can only

³⁶ "Eva Thompson", 13 April 1872, p. 2 col. 3; Methodist Hymn Book, p. 175.

³⁷ Sizer, p. 128; Schneider, p. 351.

³⁸ TPW, 23 December 1873, p. 2 col. 2; 16 March 1883, p. 6 cols. 2-3.

speculate on the significance of the class meeting to those who shared the experience with the same faces for over a decade, such as Lucinda Perkins and Phebe Tobin, two widows who attended the same Milltown class for over twenty years.³⁹ Since only a minority of adherents joined, and so many left, neither social expectation nor compulsion can explain those who remained for so long, only choice. The class meeting offered a spiritual intimacy that could not be found in either Sunday worship or the public prayer meeting. The class meeting offered a time apart from the household, rural, or village economy. And, as the previous chapters have shown, the class meeting could paradoxically be for some a time of family solidarity, but for others even a time apart from family ties.

However, the presence of the family at the deathbed and the persistence of men in between a fifth and a third of local church memberships complicates an interpretation of 'social religion' or the 'community of feeling' as entirely shaped or divided by gender and the ideology of separate cultural spheres for men and women. Irene Quenzler Brown has distinguished between the later consolatory fictional memoirs and their didactic predecessors of the Second Great Awakening: the latter "emphasized the facts of real lives

³⁹ Roughly one hundred members attended local class meetings for fifteen years or more, most continually.

and promoted a culture of domesticity that sought to mediate between dualities" of gender and society. Susan Juster has also argued that evangelical religious experience could level gender differences, promoting affective friendships among both men and women.⁴⁰ Robert Hitchings's memorializer described him as:

The most affectionate man I ever knew. Very frequently after I had prayed with him he would put his arms about me and embrace me in the most affectionate manner, and say how often he had listened with comfort to the voice of his dear minister.

This kind of friendship was not even exclusively evangelical. After Dugald Blair's death, a friend and former colleague published a nine verse memorial poem--originally in the local paper, but recopied in the Wesleyan. It could almost have been written by the much younger and Methodist Mary or Celia Smith.

Thou hadst a noble tender heart,
My brother, and my friend,
From which welled up a fount of love,
That never knew an end...
...
Oft thou did'st sit at midnight's hour,
Beside my fevered bed,
And till the golden daylight broke,
Upheld my fainting head,
Thou often wert the sweetest cheer,
That blessed me midst my own,
If I were lonely then alas,
Now I am doubly lone.

⁴⁰ Juster, pp. 36-37; Quenzler Brown, pp. 368-69.

...
 Thou didst not kneel with me in truth,
 Before one common shrine,
 Yet Friendship made me thine the same,
 And Friendship made thee mine.

As in Samuel Hall's obituary, the differences of denominational affiliation were important enough to mention, yet ultimately unimportant.⁴¹

This chapter has offered a speculative foray into the scant sources concerning the place of death in local religious culture. Studies from New England suggest that adult mortality levels were much lower by 1860 than implied by the contemporary culture of death. A survey of the records of the St. Stephen Rural Cemetery suggests that the deaths of children produced the most recurring grief and reminder of mortality to adult Methodists. Married couples such as Amos and Louisa Priest joined shortly after the deaths of infant children; the Stevensons who joined or rejoined in the revival in early 1874 may have also been responding to several family deaths between September and December 1873: three very young children and at least one adult.⁴² There were also a number of families where one member joined the church the same year that another died: Orissa King's father had joined in the Milltown 1869 revival, but her mother did not join until the year of her

⁴¹ TPW, 17 April 1856, p. 2 col. 1.

⁴² Douglas, p. 457.

daughter's death. However, there is no consistent pattern of this kind of timing, and obviously many Methodist adherents experienced bereavement without deciding to join the church.

According to one classic study of religion, "every human society, in the last resort...banded together in the face of death". The "power of religion depends, in the last resort upon the credibility of the banners" it places in their "hands". McKeown portrayed the "banners" of the religious tradition of which Methodism was a part in a sermon preached in St. Stephen:

Death is indeed the property of the Christian. It unbinds the chain, sets the captive spirit free and introduces it to the light and freedom of the eternal hills. If you are a Christian, to die is to gain.

For many families living in an age when a man might die from a minor woods accident, a woman from a now curable disease, or a child from an infection, the "banners" of Methodism were indeed potent.⁴³

⁴³ Berger, p. 51; TPW, 12 October 1870, p. 1 col. 6.

Postscript

And now having, in good providence of God, been permitted to complete this volume, we cherish the hope that it will supply an acknowledged want in reference to the statistics of Methodism, and prove useful as a work of reference."¹

In the parish of St. Stephen, New Brunswick, lay men and women repeatedly renumbered Methodist churches by remarkably varied and independent religious choices. More than a precursor of modern 'consumer religion', this variety was rooted in the nature of voluntarism, in the emphasis on individual decision in Methodist belief and worship, and in the associational fluidity within Methodist polity. Church growth reflected not just the geographic mobility of rural and village residents, but repeated revivalism shaped both by wider evangelical expectations and local circumstances. Although proselytism brought Methodism a larger share of the overall population, many Methodists moved to other churches or maintained multiple denominational affiliations. This denominational mobility, low membership rates and high membership turnover, and shortages of both lay leaders and financial supporters combined with the differing patterns of

¹ Cornish, p. 112.

church growth within the parish show how Methodists responded as individuals with distinct denominational paths.

Despite the ideology of family religion and Christian nurture, church membership was neither a prescribed nor socially timed rite of passage, but the experience of a minority within families. Male members were more likely to join the church while married and to join with or follow their female relations. Women--attracted by the ideal of 'evangelical womanhood' and unique opportunities for community and voice--were the majority of members, and demonstrated greater independence than men in timing their memberships at any stage of the life course, in association with or apart from their families. Since low and fluid church involvement predated industrialization in St. Stephen, these patterns limit the applicability of secularization theory to the history of religious practice in Canada.

Yet despite the varied and independent denominational paths followed by lay Methodists, much of traditional Methodist piety persisted in St. Stephen during the 1860s and 1870s. Though the house 'church' would disappear by the 1880s, the class meeting survived until 1890. Revivals occurred more frequently than they had since the 1830s, and church membership remained primarily an adult decision,

sometimes even preceded by adult baptism. Finally, 'spiritual histories' still memorialized local Methodists, recounting their conversions and for a few even sanctification. These 'histories' along with Methodist hymnody and Methodist involvement in the rural cemetery movement portray the evangelical version of 'holy dying'. This, the class meeting, and the revival comprised the social ideal of nineteenth century Methodism: the community of feeling.

This thesis raises a number of questions for future studies of the significance of denominational affiliation in nineteenth century Canadian society. It calls first for a more interdisciplinary approach to religion, one that integrates literary and quantitative sources from both within and outside denominational print culture or institutional records. Yet before consideration in a comparative perspective, lay religion must be portrayed and understood on its own terms and in its own era, neither clouded by assumptions of a past 'golden age' of religiosity and 'communitas', nor forced into teleologies of secularization, industrialization, or modernization. Most of all, this thesis advocates a more dynamic understanding of church involvement, one that distinguishes the varying types and duration of denominational affiliation and one

that recognizes that for many this affiliation was not fixed but fluid. With this understanding, relationships between denominational affiliation and political or social ideology and behaviour can be more thoroughly and cautiously delineated. Similarly, the analysis of religion and social class must move beyond denominational elites or print culture, and examine the social status and economic role of women as well as men, both within the associational layers of religious groups themselves and within their local communities. These tasks will be challenging and complex, but the distinctive lives of lay believers deserve nothing less.

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