

**WILLIAM BOOTH,  
CATHERINE MUMFORD  
AND THE METHODIST  
REFORMERS**

**By**

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## **WILLIAM BOOTH, CATHERINE MUMFORD AND THE METHODIST REFORMERS**

### **I The Booths**

The Methodist reform movement of the 1850s led to many defections from British Wesleyan Methodism in what is sometimes called “The Agitation”.<sup>1</sup> Amongst these defectors were William Booth (1829-1912) and Catherine Mumford (Booth – 1829-90), of Salvation Army fame.

William Booth had been brought up as a nominal Anglican, but when he was 15 he began to attend the Wesley Methodist Chapel in Nottingham in the north of England. It was through the ministry of this chapel that he was converted not long after. In 1849 he became unemployed, so he moved to London and joined the Wesleyans there.

Catherine Mumford was born in Derbyshire not far from where the Booths lived, though the two families were, at that time, unknown to each other. She was brought up a Wesleyan Methodist and for most of her childhood lived in Boston, Lincolnshire. The Mumfords moved to London in 1844, not far from where William Booth was later to live. William and Catherine did not attend the same chapel but were introduced by a Methodist Reformer acquaintance.<sup>2</sup>

### **II The Divisions in Methodism**

It was not long after the death of John Wesley in 1791 that British Methodism began to divide. Because of ministerial dominance, one group broke away as early as 1797 to form the Methodist New Connexion. Another split occurred when Primitive Methodism was founded in 1811. This later became a large body. Another group of defectors, mainly in the south-west of England, broke away in 1815 to form the Bible Christians. Further defections led to the formation of the Protestant Methodists in 1827-28 and the Wesleyan Association in 1835. These two last groups amalgamated in 1836.<sup>3</sup>

The movement referred to in this article is the Methodist or Wesleyan Reformers, the foundation of which was laid by a series of incidents, culminating in 1849. As many as 100 000 left the Wesleyan Methodists to join the Reformers by the mid-1850s. In fact, the Wesleyans experienced a decline of over 56 000 in the year 1850-51 alone, most of whom would have joined the Reformers.<sup>4</sup>

For much of the first half of the nineteenth century the Wesleyan Methodists strongly emphasised the supremacy of the Conference, which was run by the autocratic Jabez Bunting (1779-1858) and, what was seen as, a clique of likeminded ministers, based in London. This antagonised many.

In 1846 the first of a series of anonymous Fly Sheets criticising the ruling party was published and circulated to Wesleyan ministers. A second appeared later that year, another in 1847 and a fourth in 1848. They labelled Bunting as the main villain, and whilst raising valid points of objection they also, as Maldwyn Edwards put it, engaged in “exaggeration,

misrepresentation and personal abuse". At the beginning of 1849 some of Bunting's supporters issued "Papers on Wesleyan Matters" attacking the anti-Bunting faction, which, like the papers they criticised were "venomous in tone and scurrilous in detail". To further add to the dispute, later that year the Fly Sheets were bound together and made widely available.<sup>5</sup>

The 1849 Conference conducted an investigation into the authorship of the Fly Sheets and only succeeded in making matters worse. That Conference expelled three ministers, James Everett (1784-1872), who was assumed to be the author, and William Griffith Jr. (1806-83) and Samuel Dunn (1797-1882), who had published material in support of the Fly Sheets.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, Griffith and Dunn had refused "to satisfy the Conference as to their innocence in the matter of the 'Fly-Sheets'" themselves.<sup>7</sup>

These expulsions, however, did not solve the problem. These three ministers were now free to do and say what they liked, so they toured the country, speaking at meetings, strongly defending their viewpoint. This included a major gathering at London's Exeter Hall on 31 August that year. Yet, the three dissidents initially urged their supporters in meetings and in a published letter "to keep their present relations with Methodism". However, their activities were widely reported, so the whole sad affair snowballed and it became the trigger for many rank and file Wesleyans to defect over the next few years and in some instances whole societies were expelled. Memorials with 50 000 signatures supporting the Reformers' case were presented to the 1850 Conference. The Conference responded by expelling another minister, the Rev. James Bromley.<sup>8</sup>

In March 1850, so before that year's Wesleyan Conference, about 400 Reformers met in Albion Chapel in London to form a new body. This gathering they called a "Delegate Meeting".<sup>9</sup> The term "Conference" presumably had too many bad connotations for them and seemed to represent a form of government that they no longer accepted, though they did use it later. This meeting drew up a sixteen point constitution and issued a "Declaration of Principles". There were several very significant points in that declaration, which clearly determined a new road ahead. They were:

That the admission of new persons into the church, the exercise of discipline upon them, and their exclusion from the Church are rights vested solely in the hands of the Church members, to be exercised by them either directly or representatively, and that it is the right of members to be present at all meetings for the transaction of the general business of the Church.

That the nomination and election of all office-bearers is the inalienable right of the Church.

That whilst desirous of maintaining the Connexional principle, we hold that all local courts should be independent and their decisions affecting local internal economy final.<sup>10</sup>

This new branch of Methodism, later to be called the Wesleyan Reform Union (WRU), was thus democratic and largely congregational in government. Its members did not intend becoming subject to a ruling elite. The Reformers at this time, it needs to be understood, still considered themselves to be Wesleyans, as their name indicates. They were Reformers, yes, but they were Wesleyan Reformers.

### III The London Reformers

The Wesleyan reform movement was never strong in London, for it was a protest against the stranglehold that some ministers in London had upon Wesleyan Methodism. Indeed, the WRU had no churches at all in London after 1880.<sup>11</sup> However, the movement did have some in the early 1850s.

One of the main London circuits badly affected by this division was the “sixth London”, which was centered on the Hinde Street Church in London’s West End. William Booth was never directly associated with this circuit, but it none-the-less plays a part in this story and gives us a picture of the Reformers in London. Hinde Street had, in fact, invited Samuel Dunn to become its minister immediately before his expulsion, but that inevitably came to nothing.<sup>12</sup> Ironically, Jabez Bunting had been a minister at Hinde Street in 1815-16 and one of his sons, W. M. Bunting, was there in the years leading up to “The Agitation” from 1846-48, and the son was still there as a supernumerary in 1849.<sup>13</sup>

The leading Reformer at Hinde Street was Frederic Grosjean, “a thriving West End tradesman”, a local preacher and a class leader. He had chaired two meetings in London at the end of 1849, which were held to discuss the recent expulsions, and at least one other meeting in Yorkshire. He also asked some awkward questions of members of the Methodist hierarchy at a meeting of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society the following January, but, as a known Reformer, he was silenced. That March he was appointed secretary of the London Corresponding Committee, which had been established to promote the reform movement and to look after the welfare of its members.<sup>14</sup> He was still speaking at meetings for the Reformers in December 1852, when Catherine Mumford planned to hear him, but was unwell and unable to do so.<sup>15</sup>

Joseph Beaumont, the superintendent of the Hinde Street Circuit, had tried to steer a middle course in the dispute, but as matters worsened this became impossible. He was instructed by the District Meeting to bring Grosjean to trial, which he failed to do, though he did suspend him from his role as a local preacher. Other lay preachers were also suspended. Beaumont, for his trouble, was hauled up before the Conference for failing to act on the instructions of the District Meeting.<sup>16</sup>

The Hinde Street circuit lost three chapels and many members to the Reformers. For a while confusion reigned, with the names of some local preachers appearing on the preaching plans of both the Wesleyans and the Reformers. In three years this circuit lost 450 members, most, presumably, joining the Reformers.<sup>17</sup>

In the years 1852-54 William Booth served as a preacher in two circuits belonging to the Reformers, one in the south of London, the other in the county of Lincolnshire. Booth became engaged to Catherine Mumford on 15 May 1852, and, after he moved to Lincolnshire later that year, they were apart for 14 months. The letters they sent to each other from the time of their engagement are a treasure trove of information on the Methodism of that time, particularly of the Reformers. Most of the remaining material in this article will be drawn from this correspondence.<sup>18</sup>

After arriving in London in 1844, Catherine Mumford and her mother attended the Brixton Wesleyan Methodist Church, south of the Thames. Catherine followed the trials that Methodism was going through closely and with some unease. She attended a major Reformers’ meeting at

Exeter Hall, presumably the one in August 1849, and she was stirred by their cause. She later expressed her feelings of support for the Reformers to her female class leader, who was not pleased and tried to persuade Catherine to change her view, but Catherine refused. The class leader withheld Catherine's class ticket, presumably after consultation with the minister, effectively expelling her from the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

Catherine later remembered,

This was one of the first great troubles of my life and cost me the keenest anguish. I had been nursed and cradled in Methodism, and loved it with a love that has gone altogether out of fashion amongst Protestants for their Church. At the same time I was dissatisfied with the formality worldliness, and defection from what I conceived Methodism ought to be... I believed that through the agitation something would arise which would be better, holier, and more thorough... In this hope and in sympathy with the wrongs that I believed the Reformers had suffered, I drifted away from the Wesleyan Church, apparently at the sacrifice of all that was dearest to me, and of nearly every personal friend.<sup>19</sup>

Her stand was not taken lightly. Her future was unclear, but Catherine Mumford was always a woman of principle. Fortunately for her the Reformers established a church at Binfield House, near where she lived. She was soon given a class of teenaged girls to look after, a task that she took very seriously. She used to get each of her class to pray and sometimes these "prayer-meetings" lasted an hour-and-a-half and left her with no voice. She also encouraged them to speak to her individually about what she had said in class and sometimes they would "pour out their hearts" to her.<sup>20</sup>

After William Booth arrived in London he worked and lived in Walworth, not far from where the Mumfords lived and attended the Walworth Wesleyan Church, where he served as a local preacher. In 1850, frustrated at being only able to preach and serve Christ in his inadequate spare time, Booth approached his superintendent minister to apply to enter the Wesleyan ministry. He was rejected, being told that "preachers are not wanted by the Connexion" and that there was "too much of the shroud" in his preaching. In spite of that, Booth seems to have had every intention of remaining with the Wesleyans, but some time after this rejection he resigned as a local preacher seemingly to concentrate on preaching in the streets. In the context of the fearful strife amongst the Wesleyans, with thousands of people resigning from the denomination, it was not a wise move. His minister, suspecting him of Reformer sympathies, withheld his ticket of membership and Booth was, thus, expelled from that Church.<sup>21</sup>

However, it would appear that Booth had not clearly sided with either party, though he probably had sympathy for the exiled ministers. He was certainly aware of what was going on, for the troubles were so widespread and so all-pervading, but at this stage in his life the politics of the church was not of great interest to him.<sup>22</sup> To him what mattered was "saving souls" (a common Booth saying). Indeed, towards the end of his life Booth described "Soul-Saving" as his life's "business"<sup>23</sup> and at this time he was not greatly concerned about how the Church was run. However, Samuel Dunn, one of the three ministers expelled by the 1849 Conference, had been William Booth's minister in Nottingham, so he must have had some sympathy for him. Not that Booth had always seen eye to eye with him during their association. For example, when

Dunn heard that Booth was preaching in the streets of Nottingham, he was not pleased and asked him, “By whose authority? Have I given you leave?”<sup>24</sup>

Booth by this time was very much a Methodist and was unlikely to move to a non-Methodist denomination. It seems probable that it was Edwards Rabbits, a wealthy shoemaker and Methodist local preacher, who invited Booth to join the Reformers, which Booth was only too pleased to do. Rabbits had sided with the Reformers in Methodism’s troubles and had recently joined them. He had earlier heard Booth preach and had been most impressed.<sup>25</sup>

Rabbits influenced William Booth in two other major respects. First, Rabbits put him in close contact with Catherine Mumford, Booth’s future wife.<sup>26</sup> Secondly, he gave Booth the opportunity to enter fulltime ministry with the Reformers. In 1852, probably in March, Rabbits urged Booth to give up his work as a pawnbroker’s assistant and become the preacher at the local Reformer chapel. Booth was very interested, but, understandably, asked where the money was coming from to pay him, after all, he said, “I cannot live on air”. At this, Rabbits offered to pay Booth a reasonable salary for the first three months out of his own pocket, if he would accept the position. Booth agreed to the terms and promptly resigned from his hated job,<sup>27</sup> leaving on 8 April, the day before Good Friday.<sup>28</sup>

His time with the London Reformers appears to have been an unpleasant one. He later complained, “the people would have nothing to do with me. They ‘did not want a parson.’ They reckoned they were all parsons.”<sup>29</sup> This was confirmed by Catherine, who could be scathing in her criticisms. She said, that they denied him “every shadow of authority”. In fact, “The leader of the local movement . . . not only denied him anything like the position of leader, but refused to give him reasonable opportunities for preaching.” Notwithstanding that they still referred to him as “their ‘hired’ preacher.”<sup>30</sup>

The spirit of independence, perhaps even rebellion, it seems, was still with them. These Reformers had not left the autocracy of Jabez Bunting to come under what they thought might be the stern rule of William Booth. Later Booth was undeniably an autocrat, in fact a General, but at this stage in his life his leadership was unlikely to have been especially stern or persistently unyielding. He was, after all, feeling his way. Indeed, in his letters to Catherine, he gives the impression that while he was more than willing to lead, and at times, as shall be seen, could be unwavering on certain issues, he was at other times prepared to concede a point.

It was probably towards the end of May that he reported in a letter to Catherine,

The Quarterly meeting last night was rather a stormy one. Your dearly beloved had a little skirmishing with your dear friend and minister Brother Gaze, who had the impudence to ask if paid agents would be admitted to the Delegate meeting. This roused all my soul and I should have given him the knowledge of a few ideas that have flitted through my brain at different times, if I had not been almost forcibly restrained by my friends Messrs Rabbits, Bolton, & Baron. Who do you think they elected? Messrs Gaze & Rabbits.<sup>31</sup>

One can only wonder about the meaning of “almost forcibly restrained”, but clearly the level of conflict between Booth and Gaze was high. Gaze appears to have been another minister in the circuit, presumably at Catherine’s Church, for Booth describes him as “your dear friend and minister”.

When three months had passed and Rabbits' money had run out Booth gladly left them. However, he was now unemployed. Catherine encouraged him to consider entering the Congregational ministry, but Booth was a Methodist through and through and he was never likely to join another denomination. Catherine, however, irritated by the disorganised Reformers, had already begun to attend a Congregational church, Stockwell New Chapel, where the preacher was the Rev. David Thomas.<sup>32</sup>

#### IV The Lincolnshire Reformers

Booth was unemployed for several months and was down to his last sixpence, which he characteristically gave away. At about this time Booth was considering the Hinde Street circuit "as a future sphere of labour",<sup>33</sup> but whether he had received any encouragement from the Hinde Street Reformers to do so is unknown. Certainly, nothing came of it at that time.

But, as so often happens, when things look blackest a light suddenly relieves the gloom. It was probably in November that he received an invitation from some Methodist Reformers in the county of Lincolnshire, near his native Nottingham, to be their minister. He accepted and arrived there on the last day of that month.<sup>34</sup>

Catherine, of course, remained in London. Stockwell New Chapel remained her primary place of worship during her fiancé's absence. However, she continued to teach her class of girls at the Reformers' Binfield House. She remained loyal to her class, but not to the Reformers. In fact, she rarely attended services at Reformer chapels again. Yet, ironically she said in one letter, "I am a reformer ... because I can be no other".<sup>35</sup> In another she said, "I am a thorough reformer", the work of which group she contrasted with "the deeds of darkness" of the main Wesleyan body.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps these are strange comments from someone rejecting the Reformers and attending a church of another denomination. For the most part she seems to have liked what the Reformers stood for, but did not like their local work at Binfield House. In fact, she even called the wider work in London "a sickening thing".<sup>37</sup>

Significantly, she thought that the Reformers held "loose notions" on the relative "position, duties & obligations of ministers & people" and she gave her fiancé a few thoughts for a sermon on the subject at the end of his Lincolnshire ministry.<sup>38</sup> If she was assessing the situation correctly, this was presumably because of the Reformers' reaction against what they considered the misuse of ministerial power in the parent body. To them, perhaps, "loose notions" were to be preferred to tight ones.

Many years later she said, "I was a great deal disappointed with the Reformers. I had hoped that we were on the eve of a great spiritual revival. Instead of this everything was conducted very much in the ordinary style, and I soon became heartily sick of the spirit of debate and controversy which prevailed to such a degree as to cripple the life and power of the concern."<sup>39</sup>

By the end of November 1852, then, Booth was based in the town of Spalding, but was also responsible for a number of other churches in the south-eastern area of Lincolnshire, near The Wash. He was even to minister on occasions in Boston, Catherine's hometown, though that was not in his circuit. The Spalding area was a Reformers' stronghold. During the preceding three years hundreds of people from that part of the country had left Wesleyan Methodism and gone over to the Reformers, though many others had remained loyal to the parent body. It was

estimated that at this time the Spalding Circuit of the Methodist Reformers had about 600 members.

However it was still not entirely clear which local chapel belonged to which group. Soon after his arrival he told his fiancée, “In many places we have the Conference chapels, in other places we have no cause but all the people are reformers.”<sup>40</sup> In April the next year the Reformers were locked out of the chapel in Sutterton by the Wesleyans, and “the people had to get in through the window”. In fact, Booth said that at that time they had to struggle with “the Conference Party at two or three places” to determine who had the rights to specific chapels.<sup>41</sup> At Gosberton the “Conference” people had “just robbed the reformers of a nice building,” which he thought would hold 400 people.<sup>42</sup> Whether the term “robbed” was justified or not, no doubt, depended on which side of the divide one sat.

Nor were all the preachers clear in their loyalties at this time, even though the dispute had been going on for more than three years. Three weeks after his arrival Booth wrote of a local preacher and at least one other leading Wesleyan in Boston who were “coming out” and joining the Reformers.<sup>43</sup>

Booth frequently used such terms as “the Conference”, “Conference man”, “Conference Chapel” and “Conference people” to refer to those in the main Wesleyan body. This probably reflects the usage of his people and, presumably, the early official Reformer rejection of that title in their own government.<sup>44</sup> The term “Conference”, then, stood for their Wesleyan rivals, who occasionally almost seemed to be the enemy.

In one prominent family in Holbeach the husband was a Reformer while his wife’s sympathies were still with “the Conference side”.<sup>45</sup> In one home where Booth stayed for a while his host was “a Conference woman” of strong convictions, so strong that Booth told his fiancée that he did “not fear much about converting her.” Yet she sent her six-year old daughter to a school run by the Reformers.<sup>46</sup>

In his letters Booth used such traditional Methodist titles as “Circuit” and “Local Preacher” to refer to the Reformers’ practice.<sup>47</sup> They were also holding “Quarterly Meetings” and “Covenant Service(s)”.<sup>48</sup> So if they had left the official body of Wesleyans they still thought and practised their faith like Methodists.

According to Booth, the “Conference party” in the Spalding area did not have “a preacher ... worth anything, with perhaps 2 exceptions”, and these he labeled “turncoats”. Those loyal to the Conference in that region had to rely on support from preachers in their Boston circuit. If it was not for them, Booth felt that the Reformers would “completely win the day.”<sup>49</sup> Indeed, “if they should stay at home, we should have all our own way.” Booth claimed that on one Sunday in Spalding itself he preached to about 500, while he estimated that the local Conference chapel had only 50.<sup>50</sup> A little later in Holbeach Marsh he preached to a congregation of 60 “in a large kitchen”, while “the Conference” had “about 6 or 7”.<sup>51</sup> Even allowing for some prejudiced counting, the Reformers seem to have been doing much better in the Spalding circuit than those loyal to the Conference.

In contrast the loyalists had the advantage in Boston. Booth had heard that there the Reformers were getting on “middling” and though they hoped to build a chapel, he only expected it to be a small one.<sup>52</sup> When he visited Boston early in the new year he found the Reformers’ “cause” there “very low”, though he said that he “would rather worship with them



than at Binfield House.” However, they already had £70 promised towards the chapel. In fact, the proposed chapel was going to be larger than Booth had expected, hopefully seating 500.<sup>53</sup>

But how was William Booth accepted in his new circuit and what did he achieve? The Spalding region is very fertile and is noted for its farming and bulb fields, therefore many of the people Booth was to minister to were farmers. The response to Booth from these Reformers was very different from that of their counterparts in London. They welcomed him as though he “had been an angel sent from Heaven”, provided him “with every earthly blessing within their ability,” and proposed that he “should stay with them forever!”<sup>54</sup> He excitedly reported to Catherine that, “My reception has been beyond my highest anticipations”, and told her that he had genuine hopes that the circuit would be all he wanted or needed.<sup>55</sup> In another letter he said, “Made very welcome. Everybody seems delighted to see me ... The prospects of the circuit are promising. Everywhere the signs of the times are good”.<sup>56</sup> So even amidst the chaos caused by the defections Booth was very optimistic.

His first two weeks in Lincolnshire were very busy, and this set the tone for his time there. He centered his activities in Spalding, where initially his hosts were a chemist called Shadford and his wife. Booth described Shadford as “the Mr. Rabbits of the circuit”, which seems to have meant that he was well off and very influential. According to the letters, the Wednesday after his arrival Booth went to Holbeach near the coast, and preached in the evening with “little, very little liberty”. The next evening he went further inland to preach at Moulton to a congregation of 18 on the subject of the “uttermost salvation”. Here he was more encouraged and felt “a good influence”.<sup>57</sup> On Friday evening he travelled with a draper named Hardy in his gig to Weston Hills. Hardy was a local but he still became lost on the dark, dirty roads. They eventually arrived about 30 minutes late, and of the original congregation of 50 about 20 had gone home because of the delay.

Booth seems to have had a day off on Saturday, a fairly common occurrence, but on Sunday 5 December he returned to Holbeach, where he took both the morning and evening services. He preached on “the faithful saying” to “an excellent congregation” in the morning, and Booth reported to Catherine that “It went well, the people wept”. After the service he met with one of the classes and found “strong men ... completely melted down”, a sure sign to Booth that God was blessing his ministry. That afternoon he took the service at a nearby village called Fleet Fen in a house in which Booth, being very tall, had difficulty standing upright. He seems to have stood in the door way between two rooms, in which was a tightly-packed congregation of about 50. He told them “how ready Jesus was to save to the very uttermost all them that come unto God by Him”. In the evening at Holbeach he preached on Blind Bartimaeus with “some little liberty” and “Four souls cried for mercy”.<sup>58</sup>

On Monday night he preached for the first time in Spalding. On Tuesday he preached with “little pleasure” in Donnington and the next day with “some liberty” in Risegate. On the next three days he went to Quadring Endike (“4 miles”), Pinchbeck Bars (“six miles”), then back to Spalding (“4½ miles”), apparently walking most of it, and preaching in each place. It is, perhaps, not surprising that on Saturday afternoon he felt “somewhat tired”.

From one of these towns he received a lift home “in a cart among a lot of jolly farmers, talking over the relative merits of England and America, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* [published that year], agricultural distress and Disraeli’s budget”.<sup>59</sup> (The disastrous 1852 budget was rejected by Parliament and caused the fall of the government.)<sup>60</sup> Booth, it appears, took little part in this

conversation. Politics, as such, was never of great interest to him except for a brief dalliance with Chartism in his youth and, in later life, in his lobbying of politicians (including Winston Churchill) after the launching of his Darkest England scheme.

In one letter he advised Catherine that though the workload was very heavy, as indeed it was, he could not imagine “matters” in any other circuit being “more to [his] taste”.<sup>61</sup> The load was indeed heavy. He was the only paid preacher in the circuit of seemingly more than ten meeting places scattered around the district. Though on occasions he received a lift or rode a horse to fulfill his preaching appointments, his most common way of travelling was walking, and that in all weathers. Mercifully the terrain in that region was flat. Buses were available for some destinations, but probably not on Sundays. The railways were still in their early days and were not generally of much use to him in that area.

Catherine called such labors “incessant toil”,<sup>62</sup> and frequently complained about her fiancé working too hard. She had the reasonable concern that he would work himself into an early grave, as many other preachers had done. But in spite of her protestations the “toil” continued. On the morning of Sunday 12 December Booth preached without “much liberty” to a 500 strong congregation in Spalding, on “This is indeed the Christ”, a subject he continued that Monday night. Sunday afternoon and evening found him preaching in Gosberton in what Booth describes as “a large, good room, capable of holding about 120”. It was crowded for the evening service. Mercifully, once more Booth received a lift to get to these places.

This is the third reference to Reformer services being held in buildings other than chapels. At Fleet Fen it was a house. The reason for this was that it was “a new cause, never on the Conference plan”, so was thus pioneered by the Reformers.<sup>63</sup> A chapel was not built there until 1872, and the work by then was operated by the Free Methodists.<sup>64</sup> In Holbeach Marsh it was “in a large kitchen”. In Gosberton the service was held in “a large good room”<sup>65</sup> near the Five Bells Inn, because they had “been deprived of the entire management of the chapel” by the Wesleyans. This was, in fact, the opening service at their new meeting place.<sup>66</sup> By contrast, at Weston Hills the Reformers had “a nice little chapel”, but “The Conference [had] no cause left.”<sup>67</sup>

Booth had apparently accepted the invitation to minister in the Spalding circuit without there being any agreement with regard to remuneration. His early letters make frequent mention of the problem, as do Catherine’s. Should he accept £60 a year if offered, or should he hold out for £80? Should he remain in Spalding if the pay was lower than expected?

Yet Catherine was more concerned about his limited education. She frequently urged him to spend more time studying. Booth, however, was a man of action and was too impatient to spend much time with books. But he did admit in one letter to her that he was running out of ideas and material for sermons, and she offered to send him outlines of sermons that she had heard. But she recognised, more than he did, that this would not solve the problem; what was needed was the systematic study of the Bible and other suitable books. In one letter she told him,

I have been revolving in my mind all day which will be the wisest plan under present circumstances, and it appears to me that as you are necessitated to preach nearly every evening, and at places so wide apart, that it will be better to do as the friends intimate and stop all night where you preach, and not attempt to walk long distances after preaching... And presuming that you generally occupy a room to yourself, could

you not rise say by 6 o'clock every morning and convert your bed room into a study till breakfast time? After breakfast and family devotion, could you not again retire to your room and determinedly apply yourself till dinner? ...

You know your appointments are not till evening and you must spend your day somewhere, will you make up your mind to surmount every obstacle, and study either "by hook or by crook", as the Conference folks say? If you cannot, I would say give it up at once, and risk the getting of a smaller circuit. I would rather you laboured absolutely for nothing and have plenty of time to study, than to have £80 without any. Everything depends on it in the future....

I would not advise you to leave the circuit because of salary on any account, if they will give £60 and there is a prospect of studying. But if you really see no possibility of studying, don't stay for any amount of money... Do not be over anxious about the future. Spalding will not be your final destination, if you make the best of your ability.<sup>68</sup>

Booth appreciated his fiancée's good intentions, but he felt that her suggestions were impracticable. First, It was very cold on winter mornings in Lincolnshire, and dedicated though Booth may have been, a cold room without a fire did not encourage him, a reluctant student, to sit down to study. Secondly, on most days he spent either morning or afternoon in visitation and that drastically reduced the time available for study.

In the middle of December Booth was brought before the relevant circuit "committee" to discuss his call and financial reimbursement. Booth was told that he had given "maximum satisfaction" and was therefore given "a unanimous invitation" to continue in the circuit. The committee wanted to call him for a year, but Booth suggested that the call should be open, with either party giving a month's notice if circumstances changed. This was accepted. Before he went in to the meeting Booth was asked how much he wanted per year, and again during the meeting. On both occasions he answered £80. The committee argued that "Circuit funds were not equal to that amount" and various sums were suggested including £65 and £62-10-0. In the end Shadford proposed £70, which was "carried unanimously" and accepted by Booth.<sup>69</sup> William Booth was never afraid to ask for money a trait later followed by his Salvation Army.

When one compares this with other preachers in the different denominations in the early Victorian era Booth's salary was quite reasonable. Preachers were, in fact, paid quite different sums, determined by a number of circumstances, but primarily what their local church, circuit or parish could afford to pay. One Congregational minister, ordained in 1833 was paid only £8 per annum for his first two years, which later rose to £20, and later still to £80, plus, in the last case, a rent free home. In the early years this man appears to have been serving only on a part-time basis, then later full-time. One Methodist "Missionary" in Kent in the 1840s was paid only three pounds, three shillings a quarter.<sup>70</sup> When it comes to the income in other fields of labour, such as railway workers, miners, millers, tailors and police officers, many men were getting less than Booth and women less still.<sup>71</sup> By comparison with these, for a young preacher Booth was doing rather well.

The committee also gave Booth the title "Circuit Missionary", apparently without consultation with him. In the Christian thinking of that time the term "Missionary" was not reserved only for those who took the gospel overseas, but also for some who proclaimed it at

home. But Booth was not pleased with it. He bewailed to Catherine, “I abominate that title”. He preferred to just see only his name on church documents, rather than a concocted title with which he was not comfortable.<sup>72</sup> However, when the circuit later produced a “bill” advertising his preaching they still used that title, which made Booth “real wild”.<sup>73</sup>

What title to give him was, in fact, a problem. Not being ordained he could not have used the title Reverend, though on at least two occasions at this time the *Stamford Mercury* called him “the Reverend William Booth”.<sup>74</sup> There also appears to have been some reluctance to call such a young and untrained man superintendent of the circuit, even though as the only paid preacher he was fulfilling that function. In fact, at one business meeting where Mr Shadford called him “Superintendent”, a Mr Ward strongly objected. Ward conceded that Booth should have “the position, authority, power, etc.” implied by that title, but he did not believe he should have “the name”.<sup>75</sup> Catherine assumed from that that Ward must be “a weak minded man” and “a poor reformer”, but she usually had a bad opinion of those who opposed her fiancé/husband. Strikingly, she also went on to say that she believed “all such authority was unscriptural & antichristian. A conference Superintendent is as great a monstrosity as a popish priest.” Her criticism, it should be noted, was of “A conference Superintendent”, perhaps she did not view a superintendent in the Reform movement quite so badly. To her any preacher should be “A pastor, a minister, a father ... to his flock” rather than “an authoritative ruler”.<sup>76</sup>

Whatever Booth’s official position he chaired the committee which drew up the circuit preaching plan, but complained that the committee took two days to do the task. He thought he could have done a better job himself in half a day and he was probably right. William Booth never enjoyed being controlled by committees. The General was already emerging. In the end he was planned to preach “3 times nearly every Sabbath and 4 times in the week”.<sup>77</sup> When Catherine heard about that workload she was furious. She called it “a monstrous system of injustice”.<sup>78</sup>

Catherine at this time began to argue that her fiancé should again consider joining the Congregational Church.<sup>79</sup> However, busy though he may have been, William Booth was enjoying himself. He loved preaching. He loved being busy. He loved being a Methodist. In spite of some organisational problems, William Booth was in his element.

William’s letter answering his fiancée’s suggestion has been lost, but it is clear from Catherine’s next but one that he was unhappy with it. It would seem that William Booth preferred to preach for a church in chaos, even if it meant having to do more than could be reasonably expected, than for the Congregationalists, whose latent Calvinism Booth detested. In this letter Catherine took a backward step; she wrote in support of his resolve, saying, “I never dream of you being anything but a Methodist, nor do I wish it”. Yet she could still call the system, in which Booth laboured, “very defective”.<sup>80</sup> It would seem that if she loved Methodism, her feelings were a lot less favourable towards the Reformers’ section of it. In the middle of March William repeated his resolve. “I am for Methodism most unquestionably,” he wrote. “I am determined to stand by it.”<sup>81</sup>

In the Spring and Summer of 1853 the Wesleyan Reformers considered a plan to amalgamate with the Methodist New Connexion, which had been the first group to break away from the parent body (1797). Booth was an eager supporter of the plan, having at one stage written to *The Wesleyan Times* (the Reformers’ printed “voice”) expressing support for the idea. His first comments on the subject to Catherine appear in an undated letter, probably written at

the end of February, 1853, and certainly before mid-March. In it he says, “How I wish the Reformers would amalgamate with the New Connexion or with the [Wesleyan] Association and that all this agitation were ended.”<sup>82</sup> Catherine was also keen on the idea. She believed that an amalgamation with the New Connexion “would be a great blessing, and eventually do most towards enhancing the cause of religious liberty, by forming one, powerful, liberal body to compete with the conference System and show its deformity and falseness by contrast.”<sup>83</sup>

As early as the second week in April the amalgamation was discussed at the local Reformers’ District Meeting. (Amongst the Reformers, as with the Wesleyans, a number of churches made up a circuit and, in the early years at least, a number of circuits a district). At that meeting Booth spoke in favour of the plan. In addition, Messrs Shadford, Hardy and Brown, along with others in their circuit, “strongly pressed a motion in favour of the amalgamation with the Connexion, but the motion was lost.” Booth says that what he himself said, “was well received”, though it appears at one stage he was a “little insulted”, though he gave no details as to how or by whom. Booth went home “more than ever out of love with the Movement [the Reformers] generally”, yet “more in love than ever with” his own circuit. Booth described the meeting as “a poor affair”, but this may just have been because it did not lead to the result he had desired. Afterwards he made the significant comment that he was “half resolved to write off directly and offer myself to the New Connexion”.<sup>84</sup> It was to be some months before he was fully resolved to do so.

Booth was clearly disappointed that the plan was not approved, but his hopes were not completely dashed. In June he wrote to Catherine expressing the hope that his circuit would go it alone and “amalgamate and take me, take us, along with it”,<sup>85</sup> though this seems to have been unlikely to happen. The issue was also discussed at the New Connexion conference that year. This conference gave the matter favourable consideration, but did not commit itself. By July he had “given up hope” of the Reformers generally agreeing to an amalgamation, and his circuit seemed “determined to hang to the whole body.”<sup>86</sup> Yet a little later he once more expressed hopes that his circuit would amalgamate.<sup>87</sup> It is difficult to determine how much this seeming indecision amongst the Reformers was dependent upon Booth’s changing perception (perhaps because of his changing mood) and how much it reflected the actual situation.

William and Catherine began to think seriously about other options, and the Methodist New Connexion arose as the most likely avenue of service. But Booth, for once, was in no hurry, though Catherine was. He was generally happy in his present sphere, and felt at this stage that the future could be left to take its course. Catherine, though, did not like the uncertainty.

However, as far as Booth was concerned, though he was generally content in Spalding, his ministry there did not always reach the heights he desired. Years later he complained of “the stagnation into which [he] settled down”, and though he was still aiming at “the Salvation of the unconverted and the spiritual advance of [his] people”, he felt that he was too easily satisfied with what often appeared to him “unfruitful work”. Catherine described his condition at this time, with the concern that comes from being far away from the one you love, as one of “great mental and spiritual depression”. This, quite probably, was an exaggeration, though Booth’s moods could swing frequently and dramatically. The impetus to emerge from this “stagnation”, this “depression”, if it was that, was the arrival in Spalding of Richard Poole.<sup>88</sup>

Richard Poole was an itinerant Methodist evangelist and holiness teacher who arrived in Spalding early in November 1853. It is not clear to what branch of British Methodism he belonged, for he seems to have been discontent with all of them, though he was probably a Reformer. In fact, at this time he was considering going to America to join the Methodist Episcopal Church. Booth described his preaching as “rather dark and heavy”, yet “extravagant” and “very powerful”.<sup>89</sup> Poole’s fiery preaching noticeably aroused the people of Spalding. In addition, it aroused William Booth.

One night Booth went home from the meeting and fell upon his knees. As he prayed his mind was opened to new possibilities. In his words he had “a fresh realization of the greatness of the opportunity before me of leading men and women out of their miseries and their sin, and of the responsibility to go in for that with all my might. In obedience to the heavenly vision, I made a consecration of the present and the future, of all I had, and hoped to have, to the fulfillment of this mission. I believe God accepted the offering.”<sup>90</sup> Richard Poole left Spalding about a week before the end of November, but he left behind an impact upon both the circuit and its preacher.

Soon after Poole had left Booth opened another new work for the Spalding Reformers, though he did not mention its location. He did, however, state that in attendance at the first service was “the largest part of the Conference congregation”. This may have been partly because of the reputation he had forged in his year in Lincolnshire, though he claimed that nobody knew he was preaching there until he arrived in the village.<sup>91</sup>

Booth’s ministry in Lincolnshire ended with a bang, rather than a whimper, indeed, a series of bangs. He seems to have brought into practice some of the lessons he had learned from Poole. Here we will draw on Booth’s diary and autobiographical notes recorded in the various early biographies. The latter, however, written when he was quite elderly, will be used with caution, for they show definite signs that Booth’s memory was playing tricks.<sup>92</sup>

The first bang was at Donnington on a Sunday in late November. Though Booth was unwell that day, he was still able to preach at Donnington in the morning and evening and Swineshead Bridge in the afternoon. He recorded that at the evening service he was especially aware of God’s strengthening, “and fourteen came out. Many more sought Jesus, but fourteen names were taken as having found him. It was indeed a very precious meeting – a melting, moving time. May God keep them faithful!”<sup>93</sup> Booth regularly used the Altar Call, that is, the practice of calling people concerned about their spiritual condition to the front of the chapel for counselling, which was a relatively new method in England. He probably learned it from the American Methodist preacher James Caughey.<sup>94</sup>

It seems to have been that same week that Booth was scheduled to conduct a series of three evening meetings at Swineshead Bridge. Booth did not approach these particular services with optimism. He did not consider the congregation at Swineshead Bridge an easy one. However, on the Monday night two people came forward “and the Lord saved them both”, and others were clearly in distress about their spiritual condition. This raised his spirits. The next night the congregation was larger “and six cried for mercy”. Booth then decided that the signs were sufficiently favourable to extend the campaign to the end of the week, and the results proved so good that he recorded in his diary that he “saw greater success than I ever saw in a week before”.

On the Saturday as he waited for a bus to take him back to his lodgings, a man came up to him and warmly shook his hand. He told Booth his story, as tears streamed down his face.

Glory be to God that you ever came here. My wife before her conversion was a cruel persecutor, and a sharp thorn in my side. She would go home from the prayer-meeting before me, and as full of the Devil as possible; she would oppose and revile me. But now, sir, she is just the contrary, and my house, instead of being a little Hell, has become a little Paradise.

According to Booth, this was one of a number of such conversions that he heard about from that week at Swineshead Bridge. Years later he wrote that it was this week that “most effectually settled my conviction for ever that it was God’s purpose by my using the simplest means to bring souls into liberty, and to break into the cold and formal state of things to which so many of His people only too readily settle down”.<sup>95</sup>

In the week before Christmas he was invited to conduct an evangelistic campaign at Caistor in the northern part of Lincolnshire. On the Sunday evening in spite of the fact that Booth did not “preach with much liberty”, there was “power and feeling, and in the prayer meeting many cried for salvation”. He preached on each week night and believed that by the end of the week there were 36 converts.

He returned to Caistor again in the middle of January, and this time 76 were converted. He then went back to Spalding, but concluded his Lincolnshire ministry with another visit to Caistor in the first half of February. Once more there was great success with “many souls saved” every night. When he left them to travel to London, he reflected that he had found the Reformers at Caistor “a poor, despised people, meeting in an old upper room, with about thirty-five members, and I left them with over two hundred members in a good roomy chapel, full of spirits”.<sup>96</sup> Whether that improvement was long lasting or even quite that dramatic is unclear.

## **V The End of the Story**

Catherine Mumford had already rejected the Reformers. But for William Booth this was harder to do. The work was progressing so favourably in Lincolnshire that he had great sympathy for the Reformers there and would have been quite content to stay, in spite of their disorganisation, which did clash with Booth’s love of order. But, as has been seen, he had considered leaving them and joining the Methodist New Connexion as far back as April 1853. The debate between him and Catherine on this issue continued on throughout the year. She was keener on the move than he was. One moment he was for it, the next against.

Eventually, around Christmas time that year, Booth applied to become a minister of the Methodist New Connexion. But he was still full of doubts. On New Year’s Eve he wrote,

I cannot quite so confidently as you rejoice in my proposed new step; there is a dark cloud ... But I have good hopes of its dispersion. It is so many and so very kind friends I am leaving – forsaking of my own choice, and a sphere which is so adapted for me, in which God has so owned and blessed me, and for one so different, so cold, so cramped, of which I am assured on every hand, on authority I cannot dispute, that makes me so sad and thoughtful, if not fearful, lest the step would be wrong... I have long been satisfied with the theoretical part of the New Connexion, but the practical working of it is another

matter.<sup>97</sup>

To add to his doubts, early in January 1854 William Booth received an invitation from the Hinde Street circuit in London to be its minister. The letter he sent to Catherine reporting this is worth quoting in some detail, because it is significant in a number of ways. He wrote,

The plot thickens, and I hesitate not to tell you that I fear, and fear much, that I am going wrong.

Yesterday I had a letter asking me if I would consent to come to the Hinde Street Circuit, London; salary £100 a year. I have also heard that the committee in London are [sic] about to make me an offer. I would give a great deal to be satisfied as to the right path, and gladly would I walk in it, whether here or there.

You see, my dearest, it is certainly enough to make a fellow think and tremble. Here I am at present in a circuit numbering 780 members, with an increase for the year of nearly 200. Am invited to another with near a thousand. And yet I am going to join a church with but 150 members in London, and a majority of circuits with but a similar number.

I fear that, with all my cautiousness on the subject, I shall regret it ... My present intention is to tear myself away from all and everything, and persevere in the path I have chosen.<sup>98</sup>

Booth uses here the term “Hinde Street Circuit” and the question arises to what body does that refer? Was it the Hinde Street Circuit that had remained loyal to the parent body or was it those chapels in that area that had broken away to join the Reformers? The title “Hinde Street” most correctly refers to the loyalist group, as the Hinde Street Church itself remained in Wesleyan Methodism, and it was more likely to have “near a thousand” members than the other group (though Booth may be overstating the figure).<sup>99</sup> However, in a letter to William, Catherine referring to the Reformers described one group as “Hinde St”, so presumably the Reformer circuit in that area was known by that title at least by William and Catherine.<sup>100</sup> As the Hinde Street Wesleyan circuit had been decimated by the Reform controversy it is very unlikely that its leaders would invite a Reformer to be their minister. Therefore the invitation, presumably, was from the Reformers’ circuit. In fact, as was stated above, Booth had considered serving at Hinde Street twelve months before, so which ever group had issued this call it must have been very tempting.

Booth finally made the move to the New Connexion early in February 1854. According to Booth some of the Spalding Methodists regarded his decision to leave them as being “the maddest, wildest, most premature and hasty step that ever they knew a saved man to take”.<sup>101</sup> Booth left Lincolnshire with much regret. Many years later he described his time there as “perhaps the happiest eighteen months of my life”,<sup>102</sup> though in fact it had been less than fifteen months.

In 1861 William and Catherine Booth left the New Connexion and became independent evangelists, ministering mainly to the various branches of Methodism. Finally, in 1865 William founded the Christian Mission which was to become The Salvation Army.

The divisions in Methodism at times could be very rigid and disruptive. However, in one evangelistic campaign that Booth conducted for the New Connexion in Gateshead, he noted that



“Wesleyans, Reformers, Primitives and New Connexion men have all worked together, knelt at the same Communion-rail and side by side fought the common foe.”<sup>103</sup> There was not always conflict between them.

With regard to the Reformers, in 1857 many of them amalgamated with the Wesleyan Methodist Association to form the United Methodist Free Churches.<sup>104</sup> But about 17 000 remained in the newly-established Wesleyan Reform Union,<sup>105</sup> which still has about 100 churches in Britain today.<sup>106</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Alan Brooks, *West End Methodism: The Story of Hinde Street* (London: Northway, 2010), 61. See also Frederick Booth-Tucker, *The Life of Catherine Booth* (2 vols. London: Salvation Army, 1891), 1:49-50; Maldwyn Edwards, *Methodism and England: A Study of Methodism and its Social and Political Aspects during the period 1850-1932* (London: Epworth, 1943), 28-29.

<sup>2</sup> Harold Begbie, *The Life of William Booth* (2 vols. London: Macmillan, 1920), 1:20, 43-57, 99, 120; David Malcolm Bennett, *The General: William Booth* (2 vols. Longwood, FL: Xulon, 2003), 1:17-18, 35-53, 65, 77-82, 85-89.

<sup>3</sup> John A. Vickers (ed.) *A Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland* (Peterborough, UK: Epworth, 2000), 29, 233, 281, 283, 385.

<sup>4</sup> George Smith, *History of Wesleyan Methodism* (3 vols. London: Longman, Green, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1862), 3:476. Conference announced decreases in five successive years (1851-55), before the membership began to increase again. See also Geoffrey D. Lee and Oliver A. Beckerlegge, in Vickers, *Dictionary*, 386; “Wesleyan Methodist Reformers”, *Colonial Times* (Hobart, Tas.), Thurs. 18 May 1854, 2, viewed 12 Oct. 2010, <<http://newspapers.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/printArticleJpg/8776024/3?print=y>>

<sup>5</sup> Edwards, *Methodism*, 22-25; see also Oliver A. Beckerlegge, in Vickers, *Dictionary*, 125 and Smith, *Wesleyan*, 3:458-62.

<sup>6</sup> “The Wesleyan Conference: Recent Expulsion of Ministers, Official Statement” *The Argus* (Melbourne, Australia: 1848-1954), 4, Wed. 19 Dec. 1849, viewed 5 Oct. 2010, <<http://newspapers.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/printArticleJpg/4764941/3?print=y>>

<sup>7</sup> Smith, *Wesleyan*, 3:581.

<sup>8</sup> Edwards, *Methodism*, 25-29; Smith, *Wesleyan*, 3:471-72, 476.

<sup>9</sup> Smith, *Wesleyan*, 3:474. The Reformer Delegates were called together twice in 1850, in March and August, see W. Harold Jones and G. A. M., *One is Your Master: The Story of One Hundred Years of the Wesleyan Reform Union* (Sheffield, Yorks: WRU., revision of 1949 ed.), 7, 106, 11 Oct. 2010, <[www.thewru.com/info/page1.htm](http://www.thewru.com/info/page1.htm)>

<sup>10</sup> Jones & G. A. M., *One Hundred*, 7-9.

<sup>11</sup> Jones & G. A. M., *One Hundred*, 68.

<sup>12</sup> Brooks, *West End*, 63, 72.

<sup>13</sup> Brooks, *West End*, 48-49, 64, 377-78.

<sup>14</sup> Brooks, *West End*, 63-64, 68.

<sup>15</sup> Letter **CM 10**, 19 Dec. 1852, William and Catherine Booth, *The Letters of William and Catherine Booth* (ed. David Malcolm Bennett, Brisbane, Australia: Camp Hill Publ., 2003), 38; see also 35.

<sup>16</sup> Brooks, *West End*, 64-66, 74.

<sup>17</sup> Brooks, *West End*, 74-75.

<sup>18</sup> The originals of most of these letters are in the British Library, “The Booth Papers”, MSS 64799-64802; some additional extracts appear in the various Booth biographies, though others have been lost. All their extant letters to each other have been published in *The Letters of William and Catherine Booth* (ed. David Malcolm Bennett, Brisbane, Australia: Camp Hill Publ., 2003).

- <sup>19</sup> Booth-Tucker, *Catherine*, 1:48-50; Catherine Bramwell-Booth, *Catherine Booth: The Story of Her Loves* (London: Hodder, 1970), 48-49. Booth-Tucker's book relies heavily on Catherine Booth's reminiscences, so his record of this event is probably copied from her memory of it. The first half of the manuscript of the reminiscences, which presumably would have contained this incident, has been lost, but the second part appears in *Catherine Booth's Diary and Reminiscences* (ed. David Malcolm Bennett Brisbane: Australia: Camp Hill Publ., 2005). Bramwell-Booth's account appears to be based on Booth-Tucker's.
- <sup>20</sup> Booth-Tucker, *Catherine*, 1:50.
- <sup>21</sup> Begbie, *Booth*, 1:114-16; St. John Ervine, *God's Soldier: General William Booth* (2 vols. London: Heinemann, 1934), 1:47-48; Roy Hattersley, *Blood and Fire: William and Catherine Booth and Their Salvation Army* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 36-38.
- <sup>22</sup> Booth-Tucker, *Catherine*, 1:55.
- <sup>23</sup> William Booth, "To my Field Officers, throughout the World", point 6, Dec, 1900.
- <sup>24</sup> Begbie, *Booth*, 1:87-88.
- <sup>25</sup> Booth-Tucker, *Catherine*, 1:56-57.
- <sup>26</sup> Booth-Tucker, *Catherine*, 1:57-62; Ervine, *Soldier*, 1:51-55.
- <sup>27</sup> Begbie, *Booth*, 1:117-19.
- <sup>28</sup> Booth, himself, caused many to go wrong in the dating of this event, saying that his first day of "freedom" was Good Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> April. However, Good Friday was on 9<sup>th</sup> April that year, Bennett, *General*, 1:79-80, 83, note 2.
- <sup>29</sup> George S. Railton, *General Booth* (London: Salvation Army, 1912), 31, quoting from a Booth address to his Officers.
- <sup>30</sup> Begbie, *Booth*, 1:138.
- <sup>31</sup> Letter **WB 5**, second half of May, 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 9.
- <sup>32</sup> There is disagreement over when Catherine began to attend this church, but it almost certainly was not earlier than the spring of 1852, see Bennett, *General*, 1:141, note. 5, 279-80, note 6; David Malcolm Bennett, *Catherine Booth on Women's Place and Ministry* (Brisbane, Australia: Camp Hill Publ., 2004), 4-6.
- <sup>33</sup> The words are actually Catherine's, in response to something William had said in a letter now lost, see Letter **CM 13**, 7 Jan. 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 50.
- <sup>34</sup> Letter **WB 12**, 30 Nov. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 17.
- <sup>35</sup> Letter **CM 15**, 13 Jan. 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 54.
- <sup>36</sup> Letter **CM 56**, ? 16 Sept. 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 149.
- <sup>37</sup> Letter **CM 81**, 10 or 11 Jan. 1854, Booth, *Letters*, 207.
- <sup>38</sup> Letter **CM 80**, ? 8 Jan. 1854, Booth, *Letters*, 203.
- <sup>39</sup> Booth-Tucker, *Catherine*, 1:50.
- <sup>40</sup> Letter **WB 14**, 3 Dec. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 19.
- <sup>41</sup> Letter **WB 32**, 25 Apr. 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 99.
- <sup>42</sup> Letter **WB 18**, 13 Dec. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 27.
- <sup>43</sup> Letter **WB 20**, 21 Dec. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 35.
- <sup>44</sup> For example, see Booth, *Letters*, 17, 18, 20, 23, 27, 32.
- <sup>45</sup> Letter **WB 14**, 3 Dec. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 19.
- <sup>46</sup> Letters **WB 21** & **WB 22**, 23 Dec. & 27 Dec. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 36, 41.
- <sup>47</sup> Letters **WB 12**, **WB13**, **WB 14**, **WB 16**, **WB 17**, **WB 18**, **WB 19**, Booth, *Letters*, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 26, 28, 30, etc.
- <sup>48</sup> Letters, **WB 20**, **WB 23**, **CM 13**, **CM 16**, **CM 29**, **CM 30**, **CM 44**, Booth, *Letters*, 36, 48-49, 50, 58, 88, 90, 123. Though these references are mainly from Catherine's letters they seem to be in direct response to William's letters, some of which are missing.
- <sup>49</sup> Letter **WB 16**, 6 Dec. 1852, Booth *Letters*, 23.
- <sup>50</sup> Letter **WB 18**, 13 Dec. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 27.
- <sup>51</sup> Letter **WB 22**, 27 Dec. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 42.
- <sup>52</sup> Letter **WB 20**, 21 Dec. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 35.
- <sup>53</sup> Letter **WB 23**, ? 3 Jan. 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 48.

- <sup>54</sup> Begbie, *Booth*, 1:155, quoting from William Booth's "reminiscences", which were destroyed in World War Two.
- <sup>55</sup> Letter **WB 12**, 30 Nov. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 17.
- <sup>56</sup> Letter **WB 13**, 1 Dec. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 18.
- <sup>57</sup> Letter **WB 14**, 3 Dec. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 19.
- <sup>58</sup> Letter **WB 15**, 6 Dec. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 20-21.
- <sup>59</sup> Letter **WB 17**, 9 Dec. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 26.
- <sup>60</sup> Robert Blake, *The Conservative Party from Peel to Thatcher* (London: Fontana, 1985), 83-84, 370.
- <sup>61</sup> Letter **WB 26**, 15 Jan. 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 56.
- <sup>62</sup> Letter **CM 6**, 5 Dec. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 24.
- <sup>63</sup> Letter **WB 15**, 6 Dec. 1852, Booth *Letters*, 20-21.
- <sup>64</sup> The chapel has now been turned into a home, but retains an old plaque that states "Free Methodist Church. Erected 1872.", 24 Nov. 2010, <[www.ruralandequestrian.com/360.html](http://www.ruralandequestrian.com/360.html)>
- <sup>65</sup> Letter **WB 18**, 13 Dec. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 27.
- <sup>66</sup> Hattersley, *Blood*, 58, quoting from the *Stamford Mercury*, 17 Dec. 1852.
- <sup>67</sup> Letter **WB 15**, 6 Dec. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 20.
- <sup>68</sup> Letter **CM 7**, 12-14 Dec. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 29-30.
- <sup>69</sup> Letter **WB 19**, 16 Dec. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 30-31.
- <sup>70</sup> Kenneth Young, *Chapel* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1972), 165-66.
- <sup>71</sup> Geoffrey Best, *Mid-Victorian Britain: 1851-75* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971), 95-98.
- <sup>72</sup> Letter **WB 20**, 21 Dec. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 36.
- <sup>73</sup> Letter **WB 22**, 27 Dec. 1852, Booth, *Letters*, 41.
- <sup>74</sup> Hattersley, *Blood*, 58.
- <sup>75</sup> Letter **WB 24**, 4 Jan. 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 49.
- <sup>76</sup> Letter **CM 13**, 7 Jan. 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 51.
- <sup>77</sup> Letter **WB 26**, 15 Jan. 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 55-56.
- <sup>78</sup> Letter **CM 17**, 1 Feb. 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 62.
- <sup>79</sup> Letter **CM 17**, 1 Feb. 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 62.
- <sup>80</sup> Letter **CM 19**, 7 Feb. 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 63-64.
- <sup>81</sup> Letter **WB 28**, probably 14 or 15 Mar. 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 82.
- <sup>82</sup> Letter (**WB 27**) late Feb. 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 76. Note that where the number of the letter is in brackets, this indicates that the letter is copied from the early biographies, as it is missing from The Booth Papers. *The Wesleyan Times* has been described as "a paper notoriously hostile to the principles and interests" of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, Smith, *Wesleyan*, 3:581, see also 461.
- <sup>83</sup> Letter **CM 37**, ? 30 May 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 105.
- <sup>84</sup> Letter (**WB 30**), possibly 12 Apr. 1853 (certainly mid-Apr.) Booth, *Letters*, 96.
- <sup>85</sup> Letter (**WB 34**), ? 17 June, 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 118.
- <sup>86</sup> Letter (**WB 36**), early or mid-July, 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 133.
- <sup>87</sup> Letter (**WB 37**), ? 6 Aug. 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 139.
- <sup>88</sup> Begbie, *Booth*, 1:224-25; Ervine, *Soldier*, 1:69-75; Railton, *Booth*, 39-40.
- <sup>89</sup> Letter (**WB 44**), ? 8 Nov. 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 170.
- <sup>90</sup> Railton, *Booth*, 40. This seems to be a quotation from Booth's "reminiscences".
- <sup>91</sup> Letter **WB 47**, ? early Dec. 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 188.
- <sup>92</sup> The dating of this material is open to question, but it fits best at the end of Booth's time in Lincolnshire. This dating issue is very complex, but for those wishing to examine it, see Bennett, *General*, 145-46, note 69.
- <sup>93</sup> Booth-Tucker, *Catherine*, 1:99. The quotation is from Booth's diary. See also Begbie, *Booth*, 1:156; Railton, *Booth*, 33.
- <sup>94</sup> For the origins of this practice see David [Malcolm] Bennett, *The Altar Call: Its Origins and Present Usage* (Lanham, Maryland: Uni. Press of America, 2000).
- <sup>95</sup> Booth-Tucker, *Catherine* 1:99; Begbie, *Booth*, 1:156-57; Railton, *Booth*, 33-34.
- <sup>96</sup> Booth-Tucker, *Catherine*, 1:100-101.
- <sup>97</sup> Letter (**WB 49**), 31 Dec. 1853, Booth, *Letters*, 195.
- <sup>98</sup> Letter (**WB 52**), ? 11 Jan. 1854, Booth, *Letters*, 208.

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<sup>99</sup> Alan Brooks says that the Sixth London Wesleyan circuit had a membership of over a thousand in the early days of the trouble, but this had declined to 798 by the third quarter of 1853, e-mail to the author, 16 Dec. 2010. It is known that that circuit lost about 450 members between 1851-53 (Brooks, *West End*, 75). Yet, even if most of those joined the Reformers, it is difficult to imagine that break away group having anything close to a thousand early in 1854. However, Booth might be guessing or getting confused with earlier figures he had heard.

<sup>100</sup> Letter **CM 81**, ? 10 or 11 Jan. 1854, Booth, *Letters*, 207.

<sup>101</sup> Letter (**WB 52**), possibly 10 or 11 Jan. 1854, Booth, *Letters*, 208.

<sup>102</sup> Railton, *Booth*, 32.

<sup>103</sup> Letter (**WB 102**), 4 May 1855, Booth, *Letters*, 294.

<sup>104</sup> Edwards, *Methodism*, 29; Beckerlegge, in Vickers, *Dictionary*, 385, 386.

<sup>105</sup> Jones & G. A. M., *One Hundred*, 9-10. This figure may include children, see page 16.

<sup>106</sup> Wesleyan Reform Union, Circuits and Churches, 8 Oct. 2010, <[www.thewru.com/info/page3.htm](http://www.thewru.com/info/page3.htm)>