

L.A. HEWSON. *They seek a city: Methodism in Grahamstown*. Drawings by Dorothy Randell. Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1981. 110 pp., including map, photographs and illustrations. R6,50 (excluding postage and packing). ISBN 0 86810 068 4.

Professor Hewson's book indeed "skims the story of those 1820 Settler Methodists and those who have succeeded them, lingering here and there over special events in their pilgrimage", because one would perhaps expect more from a study of a period of one hundred and sixty years. It is, however, a valuable contribution to both ecclesiastical and local history. The work is an attempt to single out the significant part played by Methodism in Grahamstown, and in that the author has succeeded. Methodism not only influenced the religious development of Grahamstown but the whole community, especially with regard to missionary work and education. It laid the foundation for church and school in this place so full of history.

First there is the striking map of Methodist sites in Grahamstown, followed by an impressive and well-ordered table of contents which helps the reader to know exactly what to expect, although there is no hint of the bibliography at the end. The book consists of a foreword and seven parts. Each part has a suitable heading and sub-headings, which help to systematise the work.

Part I, mainly an introduction, deals with the development of, and the part played by, Methodism in achieving churches, schools, a press, and important buildings in Grahamstown.

Parts II and III are closely related. The search for a place of worship is the central theme throughout. Part II deals with the first five centres for preaching. The place-indications and the research on these are of distinguished quality. In Part III the author gives an account of the various chapels and churches which were erected between 1822 and 1962. The prevailing financial problems of those days, the increasing numbers, the constant lack of space, and interesting events like the fire of 23 November 1833 in the Wesley Chapel, or the controversy over the organ (perhaps a little redundant) have all received attention. Of extreme historical importance is the opening of the Cape Parliament which took place in the Wesley Chapel in 1841 — the only occasion on which it assembled away from Cape Town. Most important, however, are the description, history, and illustrations of the ten churches and chapels which were established in Grahamstown, and gave unselfish service to the community — White, Coloured and Black.

Part IV deals with education. The author describes the part played by Methodism in establishing schools as an offer of service to youth. Grahamstown was the place where the training of white ministerial students first started and eventually led to the establishment of a Chair of Divinity at Rhodes University in 1946. There are valuable registers on page 62, but the controversy over the identification of the Eureka diamond (three pages) is perhaps irrelevant.

Part V deals with the Commemoration Chapel in Grahamstown, especially its construction, the stone-laying, the dedication services, the Taylor Mission, and most of all, the commemorations themselves; the gratitude of the 1820 Settlers to God for their triumph over the adversaries of the first 25 years; their travail in building the House of God; their remembrance of those who fell in the two World Wars.

Part VI, "Homes of notable Methodists", pays attention to the 1820 Settlers' Memorial and other buildings of Methodist interest, especially the Wood dwellings — all these would justify a pilgrimage in themselves.

Part VII consists of three appendices: Appendix 1 is a register of the senior ministers resident in Grahamstown; Appendix 2 is a tribute to venerated Methodists (like Shaw and Ayliff); and Appendix 3 has a word on the old Wesleyan Cemetery (including a diagram on page 106).

Prof. Hewson consults the most reliable sources for his study. At the back of the book is a bibliography, but it is regrettable that there is no index. The scientific quality of his work is beyond question, and as a former Dean of the Faculty of Divinity he handles the material with care and writes in a language one understands. The references and footnotes could perhaps have been more thorough; for example: the historian would like to know how Bechuanas ended up in the Eastern Province, but Prof. Hewson is entirely convincing in all his arguments. Bound in paperback the book is attractive in appearance, and is not only a valuable souvenir for church and community, but also contains helpful information for the historian.

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