

## **CHURCHES OF THE WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT**

The first Christian teacher in the area was Taawao, who had learnt Christian beliefs from Wesleyan missionaries in the North Island. He preached to the local Maori, first visiting about 1840. He was later baptized under the name of Rawiri Kingi.

The Canterbury settlement was intended to be Anglican because of the intimate relationship between the Canterbury Association and the Church of England. However, immigrants included a number of Methodists, and with the arrival of every immigrant ship their numbers grew. They were the most determined denomination to reach out to the small farming settlements of North Canterbury. Presbyterians also gradually established churches in the district, as did the Baptists. The Roman Catholic Church was the last of the major religious faiths to establish a footing in the area.

At Oxford there were many adherents to the German Lutheran faith, but they attended either the Christchurch Lutheran Church or joined other faiths. Both the Plymouth (Exclusive) and Open Brethren have had a presence in the Waimakariri District since the 1880s, as has the Salvation Army. Later the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses became active in the area. In more recent years New Life groups have established their own or leased premises.

The following is a brief history of churches, both those still in existence and others that have been demolished or converted for other uses.

### **The Churches of Ashley, Loburn and Sefton**

#### **Ashley - Methodist**

Ashley Bank was an outpost of the Rangiora United Free Methodists, and its members commenced monthly services in 1876. In 1884 a small church was erected. This has since been demolished.

#### **Ashley – Presbyterian**

A church was built at Ashley in 1872, the trustees being the Rev. William Hogg, James Anderson, and David Carr. The Rev. Hogg had arrived in Kaiapoi just after the Rev. Kirton had been appointed there, so he was given the rest of North Canterbury as his charge, later having a manse near Sefton. The building is no longer there.

### **Ashley – St Simon and St Jude - Anglican – 39 Canterbury Street.**

The foundation stone for the Ashley Bank church of St. Simon and St. Jude was laid on 28 October 1870. It was the first church of a new parish, the headquarters of which were to be situated at Fernside. Charles Pemberton donated the land and Benjamin W. Mountfort designed the building. C. W. Mountfort designed an addition of one bay to the nave in 1884.

Regular services were held in the church until 1966. In 1973, a group of local residents stopped the church from being demolished after Church authorities had deemed it surplus to requirements, and the Historic Places Trust considered the church to have little historic or architectural value. However, it was discovered that it was a Mountfort designed church, lending further credence to the residents campaign. A tender for the church from a buyer who wanted to re-use the kauri had been accepted, but the residents protested and bought the building for \$1000. Once purchased, the group set about restoring it and mounting it on concrete piles.

Today non-denominational services are held with occasional weddings and baptisms. In recent years an annual fete has been held to raise funds for the building's upkeep.

St Simon and St Jude is now Category II on the Historic Places Trust Register.

### **Loburn – Raithby Methodist - 132 Chapel Road.**

This church in Chapel Road, North Loburn, opened in 1866. It was the result of a remarkable effort by a mere handful of settlers at a time when resident freeholders were few in number. David Patrick was its founder, with the aid of Messrs Hodgson, Free, Philpott, and Howard. It was named after Raithby Hall in Lincolnshire at Patrick's request. The site included a cemetery.

The building was shifted in 1966 to Journey's End camp in Loburn for use as a Chapel, and the site sold.

### **Loburn – St Andrew's Presbyterian – Loburn-Whiterock Road**

St Andrew's Church was opened on 26 October 1890, built by Forbes and Wadey of Rangiora. The land was given by the Carmichael family. The minister during the first five years was the Rev. R. Tout. At first the parish was part of the Sefton charge but since 1895, it has been with Rangiora.

The final service in the church was held in December 2006.

### **Loburn – St Brigid’s Catholic – 237 Loburn-Whiterock Road.**

Built by Irish settlers in Loburn to a Mountfort design, St Brigid’s was opened on 31 May 1875. St Brigid is co-patron with St Patrick of Ireland

St Brigid’s is one of very few Catholic churches in the Christchurch diocese with its own cemetery – possibly a factor in ensuring the survival of the church itself.

### **Loburn – St Martin’s Anglican – 80 Hodgson Road**

The little St Martin’s Anglican church was built in 1891 on land that had been purchased in 1878. Prior to that, the local Anglicans most likely attended services in Rangiora or were invited to the Mount Thomas homestead. The one-room weatherboard structure is an extremely modest low-church building. Renovations were made during 1988-89.

### **Sefton – Methodist – Pembertons Road.<sup>1</sup>**

A church had been built at Leithfield sometime after 1876 when a Mr Armitage was appointed to the district. Because of declining support, this church was shifted to Pemberton’s Road in Sefton in 1886, where the Methodists had formerly used the school for their meetings. This building was replaced by a brick church that opened on 3 October 1931. About 1976, an agreement was reached with the Sefton Anglicans to take over this brick church when vacated by the Methodists.

The Sunday School Hall was shifted to the Woodend Methodist Church, and the brick church was later sold into private ownership and converted into a dwelling.

### **Sefton – Presbyterian – Upper Sefton Road.<sup>2</sup>**

The first denomination to hold services in Sefton was the Presbyterians, no doubt to cater for the many pioneers from Scotland. St Luke’s present church was built in 1905 and officially opened on March 11, 1906. It replaced a wooden church built in 1873 and the old building then became used as a Sunday school until its demolition in the 1930s. The parish itself was established in 1866 when the Rev. William Hogg was the Minister for the area between Kaiapoi and the Clarence River. He lived in Sefton.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Beyond waters reach’ : Sefton School Centennial Celebrations 1984.

<sup>2</sup> Hawkins, D.N. ‘The various Methodist churches’ Rangiora & Districts Early Records Society July 2002 Newsletter

**Sefton – St Michael's – Anglican – Pemberton's Road.<sup>3</sup>**

St Michael and All Angels was built about 1870, and held services until 1976. An agreement was reached with the Methodists for the Anglicans to take over their brick church across the road. This brick church was later sold and is now a private residence.

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<sup>3</sup> 'Beyond waters reach' : Sefton School Centennial Celebrations 1984.

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