



# The Queensland Baptist Forum

The Journal of Baptist Heritage Queensland

No. 103 August 2019

## 'The Gardener' and the Silver Salver

By Bill Hughes



In August 2015 we published a biography of Pastor William Moore (1826-1906) who was the founding pastor of the Petrie Terrace Baptist Church. Now we are able to add an exciting new chapter to that project.

The book was titled "The Gardener" and it was so named because, on his arrival in Brisbane in June 1855, Moore leased a piece of land in Milton and immediately set about establishing a market garden to produce fruit, vegetables and some dairy products for the people of Brisbane. His products were much needed in the town, giving him a comfortable living. Moore had an impoverished background. But he had a burning ambition to better himself. At fifteen years of age, he moved to Bristol where he furthered his education through programs run by nonconformists of the Bristol Young Men's Society. He also was baptised in the Counterslip Baptist Church and gained considerable encouragement and assistance from his pastor, Thomas Winter. For a number of

years he served as a lay preacher of the Bristol Baptist Itinerant Society. By the time he left England for Moreton Bay in 1855 he was married and had several years' experience in what was at the time "the important profession of gardening".

Here in Brisbane, Moore was initially a member of the Wharf Street Baptist Church. When the first pastor of that church left the town, Moore became one of the team of laymen who filled in. A split took place in the Wharf Street Church in 1864 and half the members left to join other churches, or form new ones, a process in which Moore played a significant part. But his first interest was in the Petrie Terrace area, where he and William Grimes commenced a Sunday school from which the Petrie Street church grew. Moore donated the land in Chapel Street (just across from the Suncorp Stadium) on which the church was built. He became the church's founding pastor. For many years he refused to accept payment and said that people should not have to pay to hear the Good News. He worked assiduously on his small farm to maintain himself and his family and gave generously to the church as well.

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**BHQ Meetings 2019: change of date—2 Nov (AGM) 2pm @The Baptist Archives**

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(est. 1984)

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*Qld Baptist Forum* 3 issues pa

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## Stanthorpe—Thirty Years to Plant a Church! (Part 2)

This is the second and final part of the story of the founding of the Stanthorpe Baptist Church (continued from our last edition), forming another episode in the BHQ project on the history of Baptist witness on the Darling Downs, sourced from church records, Archives material, with special thanks to David and Marilyn Dunn and Rev Mark Harvey. The author is David Parker, for whom this was his original home church.

This new campaign got under way on May 20 when Mr Howard travelled to Pozieres and met with Mr Davidson again. Mr Howard wrote in his diary,

Here were the three of us [himself and the Davidsons] faced with the enormous task of bringing Christ to a district which was almost entirely devoid of Gospel witness for 25 years. What a task! Visitation evangelism alone could begin to crack the shell of the problem.

Over the following couple of days, there were many visits to local orchardists, with about half of the visits giving opportunity 'to bring Christ directly to the people in their homes.' One evening an evangelistic meeting was held in the local hall which had been erected many years earlier primarily for church services although none had been held in it on regular basis 'till now'. Mr Howard was sure that 'from now things will change!'

The visitation continued during the week (a total of



**Geoff Rolls, Mrs and Rev Dick Walker with Gospel Waggon at Thulimbah Border Gate, 1946**

more than 40 homes were reached), and religious instruction given at the school. Again, Mr Howard was 'astounded today at the utter responsiveness and opportunity the Lord gave.' He said, 'This is the best day yet. In 100% cases where we contacted folk we were able to speak about the Saviour and often very directly and forcibly.' A second evening meeting was affected by extremely cold weather with only about twenty in the hall, but it was still considered an effective gathering for evangelistic outreach.

After the Mr Howard and Gospel Waggon left the area, Mr Walker took over leadership of the venture, and visited Stanthorpe to make arrangements to hire a venue for a monthly service there. Services were held in the two centres for some time. There was support from Australia's veteran evangelist, Rev John G Ridley, MM, who conducted a three day campaign in the town late in September 1948. However, by mid-1949, reports before the Warwick diaconate indicated that the Pozieres service was not flourishing, and it was left to the pastor to decide on its continuance. So

once again, a Baptist outreach to the area was about to come to an end and Mr Walker's strong conviction about prospects in that needy centre remained unfulfilled.

### Stanthorpe consolidates

Stanthorpe itself was a more hopeful prospect. Services continued there in the CWA hall. By June 1951, the Warwick deacons were advising the Baptist Home Mission Superintendent that 'Stanthorpe was ready and ripe unto harvest and worthy of prayerful consideration by [the] Union in regards to [a] Home Missionary for that centre.' However, they added that their own church was 'not prepared to be responsible for any financial obligation.' (Deacons Minutes 10/6/1951) In response, the Home Mission indicated that its policy was to place their agents in strategic areas remote from other churches. However, they put Stanthorpe on a priority list to be adopted as an official station as soon as staff (which were in short supply) could be recruited.

The pace quickened with another visit by the Gospel Waggon in mid-1951, this time under the ministry of Rev and Mrs J Wilbur Fletcher who had taken over in 1949. Visits were made to Stanthorpe, Glen Aplin, Pozieres, and Ballandean. Mr Fletcher reported, 'The temperature was as low as 24 degrees [F, -4.5 C] at one meeting, but there was the warmth of the Spirit of God in the meeting.' Several conversions were recorded throughout the trip into the area which undoubtedly 'seems most ripe for the opening of a definite Gospel witness by the Baptists of Queensland,' he said. Then he added,

Is it true that we have a block of land in Stanthorpe? Then here is an open door. Warwick Church have risen to the challenge and at the last monthly service there were thirty people present, which did not represent all the available Baptists as several were on holidays. QB July 1951 p12-13

Finally late in the year, the Home Mission announced that a Home Missionary would be sent to Stanthorpe. The appointee was Robert A Beeston, a young man from the Fairfield church who had been highly prominent in the BUQ Youth Department and Baptist Youth Fellowship (BYF). He was just entering theological college at the time (in fact, the Home Mission was assuming that he would be successful in his entrance exam). The letter of appointment said:

Although the area is a very lovely one the building up of our work will not be without difficulty. But we believe you are equipped for the task, and with trust in God and great love for the souls of men we are certain God will use you so that instead of remaining an outpost of Baptist work it will under your ministry become a base from which our work will radiate through the district.....Later on you may find it possible to touch Inglewood which is about 66 miles distant.

He took up his duties in March 1952 when he was inducted into office by the Home Mission Superintendent, Rev AH Brooks. The choir and pastor of Warwick church journeyed to Stanthorpe for the joyous occasion which represented the culmination of a long period of ground work.

The work blossomed with the rapid establishment of youth activities, a Sunday School and other initiatives. Financially it was more than holding its own. Rev Wilfred L Jarvis included Stanthorpe in his grand Queensland itinerary, addressing a crowd of around one hundred late in 1952. Soon two services were being held each Sunday by the church which was 'full of zeal' and progressing in 'victorious style.' (QB May 1953)

Services continued to be conducted in the CWA hall in Victoria Street. (photo) In 1953, the Salvation Army closed down its work in Stanthorpe which had begun in 1895. The Baptists rented their hall in the main street, which also had a small run-down house at the back. Services were held here for about three years and it was hoped that the Salvation Army would sell the building to the Baptists, but it went to a higher bidder. So in 1956 Baptist services returned to the CWA Hall.

Although only just 21 years of age at the beginning of his ministry, Robert Beeston was a highly effective pastor but his term concluded early in 1955. By now his good work had strengthened the group to the point where it was ready to be constituted as a church. In



**A church group, about 1958**

fact, his last duty was to prepare the petition for recognition of the church as a member of BUQ. He had also surveyed Texas, Inglewood and Goondiwindi, as instructed initially by the Home Mission, and had conducted classes at the Wallangarra school.

On 4 June 1955, he married Valerie Sands of Fairfield, graduated from College the next year, being ordained on 17 Feb 1957. He went on to serve in several other places in Queensland, especially in the north, and then spent time in Tasmania (where he was General Superintendent of the Baptist Union) before becoming pastor the Windsor Road church. He retired from this church in 1996, thus ending a long and distinguished career.

The official formation of the church took place on Thursday 21 April 1955, with the church anniversary being held the following Sunday. The ceremony was

performed by the President of the Baptist Union, Rev Frederick T Smith, minister of the City Tabernacle, and there were fifteen foundation members with two more as associate members. Some of them had Baptist connections such as the Marshman, Johnston and Gibbons families. The Mayers family of The Summit had early links with the Windsor Road Baptist Church but while resident north of Brisbane had attended a Pentecostal church. Upon moving to the Stanthorpe district, they had been contacted by the Gospel Waggon ministry and came into the Baptist work where they made a vital contribution.

After the departure of Robert Beeston, the Home Mission was short staffed and was at 'wit's end' in trying to find a replacement. Local teacher, Graham T Van Cooten, provided key leadership from the pulpit for some time, until the Home Mission announced that Rev G McKecknie, recently retired from Jireh Baptist Church, would fill in for a few months. He was already familiar with the district and fitted in easily, helping the church at a crucial time in its life.

Meanwhile, not having their own building was a handicap to the young church. The block of ground situated on the corner of Hillcrest and Railway Streets was now in the middle of a rapidly growing housing area so clearing it began, along with fund raising efforts. An initial design for a modest building submitted to the Home Mission by the church was considered not suitable. After considerable negotiation, a plan was drawn up for a building following the standard Home Mission church as designed by Baptist Union architect, Ray S Smith.

The first service in the new building was held on Christmas Sunday, 1957. The official opening and dedication took place on Saturday 8 February 1958 when the President of the Baptist Union, Rev Ben Hohnke, officiated. The service was attended by about 200 people, including local civic and church representatives and visitors from other Baptist churches on the Darling Downs and Lockyer. The church cost about £1500 plus about 550 hours of voluntary effort. A residence next door to the church was also purchased as a manse.

### **Later Life**

The Home Mission was able to supply pastors during the following years, but, even though they served well, they were often moved on quickly due to the needs of the Home Mission and for health and other reasons. Among those who were in the district longer were Rev Robert Bickerton (1962-65), Rev Len Maycock (1965-68) and especially Rev Ray McKenzie (1974-81). In later years assistant pastors were also supported. By its twentieth anniversary, the church had become financially independent of the Baptist Union.

The church activities multiplied steadily. A Dorcas Society for ladies interested in serving the practical needs of the community and supporting missions was an important organisation dating from 1957. The Sunday School (later on All Age) was joined in the 1960s by the Boys' and Girls' Brigades which were effective in working with local youth. Christian Endeavour was also a useful training agency. Numerous evangelistic missions were held, often as part of a wider denominational campaign but also as local efforts. These included the Missouri Australia



Crusade and the Pan Australian Crusades. During the Billy Graham crusades, the church hosted the local landline broadcasts to packed crowds. There was also strong involvement in the activities of the Downs and Lockyer District Baptist Association and Baptist Union of Queensland, including youth exchanges.

All of these activities produced a steady growth in reported membership, climbing year by year to reach close to the 80s at the jubilee. The formation of the Uniting Church in 1977 resulted in a boost to



**Visiting US evangelist with John Dunn and Rev R C Bickerton at the church, 1964**

membership. More recent years have seen some serious fluctuations.

A visit from a team from the Solomon Islands in 1989 led to a significant renewal ministry in the church when Rev Neville Suffolk was pastor. Later, one of the team members, Festus Fama'aea and family were sponsored by the church and supported by private donations channelled through church funds under the MTQ banner. Over an eleven-year period, Festus and his wife Pritus lived on a local farm which became known as 'The Prayer Base' (and also served an indigenous church at Dinmore).

The expanding ministries of the church required more space, so in 1966 a former school building was moved onto the property. Then in 1978 a pre-

fabricated hall measuring 50' x 30' was placed across the front of the property to be used as the main church. Finally, in 2000 the current brick church was erected along the side of the block while the former school building was converted into church offices and hall. The original church had already been moved to the rear of site and the old school sold to make way for the new building.

There were also some from the church who entered full time Christian service, including Joyce Bray (nee Mayers) who became a deaconess; Carol Edgar (nee Neville) who worked alongside her husband Graham with the Australian Baptist Missionary Society in Thailand; John Johnston who entered pastoral ministry of another denomination; and Andrew Carnell who served as the local school chaplain, and then with Operation Mobilisation before becoming youth pastor at Bridgeman Baptist Community Church.

The church soon became part of the community and developed ministries oriented to local needs. It placed floats in the popular annual festivals from an early date, participated in the inter-church witness, conducted letter box drops and open air services at Christmas and Easter. It also commenced a play group, a youth coffee shop, and an emergency food service. It supported the School Chaplaincy service, with one of its members serving as the chaplain in the 1990s. For several years from 2000, the manse served as emergency accommodation for people in crisis situations.

### **Conclusion**

So a century or so after the first Baptist contact with the district, the population had grown to around 10,000 and there were other evangelical churches operating in the town. But the Baptist witness in this border area was well established, fulfilling in a way what an Australian Baptist missionary leader had mentioned in 1915 in a blog about his visit to Queensland. Travelling by rail from the south, he mentioned the border town of Wallangarra, but said, Stanthorpe was 'the real gateway to the State'. He declared: '[L]oyal Queenslanders should make [this] prolific fruit centre the introduction to their giant country.' (AB Aug 1915 p 2)

*(Continued from page 1) Silver Salver*

His first term as pastor at Petrie Terrace lasted sixteen years. Retiring at 60 years of age in 1886, a grateful and loving church presented him with a solid silver salver inscribed:

*Petrie Terrace Baptist Church*

*To The Rev. Wm Moore A Memento of Love and Esteem*

*On the close of his Sixteen Years Pastorate*

*Brisbane February 1886*

After the next pastorate terminated in just a few years, Moore became pastor again from March 1889 till the end of 1890. He continued his involvement in other churches in Brisbane for several years and extended his work to the Darling Downs area as well. He was a staunch supporter of the Baptist cause, being involved in many other activities and was the author of one of the earliest accounts of the history of the denomination in this state. After an interesting history, Petrie Terrace church closed in 1991, and the building was subsequently adapted for residential purposes.

That was the story up until now, but there is now a new development! That salver (pictured) has been with the family ever since, but they have recently decided to pass it over to the Baptist Archives where it was received in June 2019. It is hallmarked and in good condition with the inscription is easily readable. The Archives are grateful to the family for keeping this important part of our history, and now for generously passing it to us for safe keeping. It will be a prize possession of the Archives.

William Moore's full story is told in the book titled "*The Gardener*" Pastor William Moore 1926-1906. The book is available from Baptist Archives Queensland at a reduced price of \$5.00 plus postage. It is also available as an e-book.

# Baptists in Warwick - the Rose and Rodeo City

By David Parker, adapting and expanding the official centenary history by Bill Hughes

This is the final episode in the BHQ Project, Baptists on the Darling Downs, and tells the story of Baptist work in Warwick, with an emphasis on the founding period. It also includes information on the Danish Baptist witness at nearby Freestone. This account is based on the centenary history of the church written by Bill Hughes with additional information.



The current church building, 1964

## Warwick and district

Warwick, the 'Rose and Rodeo' city, is located about 160 km south west of Brisbane by road in the southern Downs region and sits at an elevation of about 850 metres. Flowing around the city is the Condamine River, the headwaters of longest river system in Australia.

The first European discovery of the area took place in 1827 when Alan Cunningham travelled through the district from the south. This led to the first settlement in 1840 when the pastoralist, Patrick Leslie established Canning Downs just west of the current urban area. He was soon joined by his brothers, and other graziers. A town, at first known as Canning Town, was soon commissioned, and land sales began in 1850. A court house, school and Presbyterian, Methodist and Anglican churches were established before the settlement was proclaimed a municipality in 1861.

In the next few decades, imposing buildings constructed of local sandstone were erected, including a new courthouse, post office and town hall. A modern new hospital was established in 1881. The Southern railway line reached the town in 1871, cementing it as a centre for a large and prosperous pastoral and agricultural area. In the early years of the twentieth century several major state and religious schools were established, giving the town another strand to its regional importance.

Warwick became famous because of the 'egg throwing' incident when, in 1917, Prime Minister, William Morris Hughes was pelted with an egg while addressing a conscription rally at the railway station. Hughes ordered the thrower's arrest but was told that the state police had no lawful reason to act, which is said to have led to the formation of the Australian Commonwealth Police.

It was the original home of the rugby league coach, Wayne Bennett, and Lt Gen Cyril Clowes, who commanded Australian forces during the crucial Battle of Milne Bay (1942), and in Christian circles, the leading Hebrew scholar, Professor Francis Andersen.

Currently, Warwick, with a town population of around 12,000 retains its prominence as a regional centre and host to motor sports, equestrian events—especially the rodeo. It is the base of the Southern Downs Regional Council.

## Earliest Baptist stirrings: the mysterious Rev JT Bytheway (1863)

Although other churches were active as early as the 1850s, a Baptist church was not formed until 1911 (and at nearby Allora and Stanthorpe in the 1950s). The nearest church was at Toowoomba, established in 1875. Despite this late start, there was considerable interest in the area by Baptists in the intervening decades.

The earliest reference to Baptist activity in Warwick is the report in the *Brisbane Courier* of 8 June, 1863 announcing that Rev John Thomas Bytheway, described as a Minister of the Baptist Church, living in Warwick, had been registered for the celebration of marriages in the colony of Queensland.

In September, the *Queensland Times* (Ipswich) reprinted an article from the *Warwick Mail* reporting on a 're-union of the members of the Baptist community' held on vacant land next to the 'residence of the minister (the Rev. J. T. Bytheway)'. It was a 'scene of festivity' with a large, well decorated marquee, and with the lots of food, to which 'ample justice was done'! About 150 people were present and heard not only the Baptist minister speak, but also Rev Thomas Kingsford (Presbyterian) and various laymen.

There are no further references available to this group of Baptists, apart from it being listed as a church in Pugh's Almanac for 1864 and 1865. It is not mentioned by the fiery Strict Baptist minister, Rev John Bunyan McCure who reported that he had preached at the Presbyterian and Wesleyan chapels and met 'several Baptists ... who said that I was the first Baptist minister they had seen or heard' and 'the first time they had heard the truth preached as they love to hear it' in Warwick. (*Earthen Vessel*, April 2, 1866, p 126). Little else is known of Mr Bytheway, but there was a man of the same name active in Methodist circles in Ipswich from about the same time up until his death in 1909. However, the details of the two identities cannot be fully reconciled.

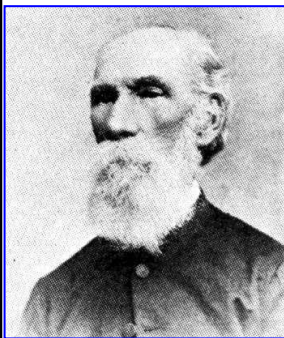
## The Irvine's Sunday School – 1871

A few years later, there is well documented Baptist activity in Warwick. Miss Emily Downes, a teacher in the Sunday School at the Jireh Baptist Church in Brisbane, married Mr Francis Irvine in 1871 and after a couple of years, they moved to Warwick, where they remained for twelve years running a grocery and drapery store. According to a letter written by Mrs Irvine in later life (*QB Forum* No 99 April 2018), they rented a hall and commenced a Sunday School and arranged for church services to be held whenever possible. The *Brisbane Courier* reported in October 1878 that the Sunday School had recently joined the Brisbane Sunday School Union and had four teachers and 38 students. Reports in subsequent years mentioned picnics held in honour of the Queen's birthday (1880) and other activities, sometimes in association with the Wesleyan church (27/5/82). In

one report Mr and Mrs Joseph Watkinson and Mesdames Smith and Mosser were listed as helpers.

After leaving Warwick, the Irvines lived in Nundah and re-joined Jireh Church in 1883. They subsequently started a Sunday School at Nundah, and in 1888, became foundation members of the newly formed Baptist Church in that suburb. (For more information, see our article on this family researched and written by Bill Hughes)

### Early Baptist Union Initiative



**Rev Wm Moore**

During this time, there was also positive interest in Warwick by the Baptist Union of Queensland. In October 1879, leading Baptist minister, Rev William Moore successfully moved a motion at the Baptist Executive meeting that formal moves be taken to investigate the idea of starting a church in the town. He was deputed to visit Warwick to see the situation firsthand.

His visit took place in February 1880 when he preached in the Methodist church on Sunday, 8 Feb, and also held a service in the Protestant Hall in the afternoon. In discussions with interested people, of whom several, if not the majority, must have been Baptist, he urged them to form a church. However, as he reported to the Baptist Union, he thought that they 'did not have sufficient courage to do so, partly on account of differences of opinion between them, and also from the unsettled circumstances in which several of them were situated.' (Minutes - BAQ Committee 13/4/1880). Consequently, they preferred to let the position remain as it was for the time being.

### In the sights of the Home Mission

Although the Baptist Association was still keen to begin a church in Warwick, it decided not to press the issue at that time. However, the idea was far from forgotten, especially because this was the time when a bold new initiative in church planting was in process of being established.

One of key reasons for the formation of the Baptist Association in 1877 was joint action by the member churches in evangelism and church planting. The main mechanism for this was set up officially in May 1883 when the Queensland Baptist Home Mission was established, with its objectives, to 'assist weak churches' and 'to establish new interests.'

The passion for outreach and church extension was almost at fever pitch over coming years when Home Mission leaders, Presidents and leading pastors continually pointed out the needs of the large areas of the colony without a Baptist witness, and challenged Queensland Baptists to rise to the occasion. In addresses to the Assembly, articles in the *Queensland Baptist* and sermons, they spoke continuously of the urgency of evangelism and church planting in towns and rural areas.

Census figures in the early 1880s indicated that out of a total population of 220,000, there were 5,500 Baptists, many of whom were located in these rural areas. It was

lamented that there was 'no Baptist mission house where continuous and well directed earnest effort may be put forth'. At a time when the only churches outside the Brisbane area were located at Ipswich, Toowoomba and Rockhampton, denominational leaders and others asked, 'What are we doing for Queensland?'. They said it was a 'reproach' (QB 4/83) that there were not more churches, while Rev William Whale pointed out that these country towns were all closer than Africa or China which had attracted plenty of interest amongst Baptists. (QB 5/87)

Warwick was invariably mentioned as one of those places that deserved a church. In 1882 it was reported that there were 20 Baptist men and 24 women in the area. This meant that there was 'ground work for a flourishing church' but assistance, such as could come through the Home Mission, was needed for any effort to succeed.

Some of these Baptists in Warwick included a young medical doctor stationed at the hospital (who unfortunately died prematurely). Others were in the district for health reasons, including Mrs Bell of Enoggera, and later, the wife of leading Queensland Baptist and former minister at Toowoomba, Rev William Higlett. In another sad case, Rev James B Gillison, a wellknown minister from the south came to the area in his last days suffering from tuberculosis, where he died in 1895.

There were also occasional pastoral contacts when people from the area travelled elsewhere to be baptised. Mr Higlett recorded some of these, and Rev John B Sneyd travelled to the area for the same reason.

In the background of this repeated interest in establishing a church at Warwick was the knowledge that the new Church of Christ denomination was making gains in the area. However, there was sympathy when in 1883, its most successful preacher, Stephen Cheek, suddenly fell ill and died while in the district.

### The Danish Baptists of Freestone Creek

Although there was no opportunity at this time for the establishment of a permanent work in Warwick, in an usual development, a church was planted at Freestone Creek, a farming area 27 kilometres north-east of Warwick.

From 1870 onwards, a number of Danish immigrants settled in this locality. Among them were the Baptists, Jens Peter Hansen and also Jens Christian Petersen who was born in Aalborg, Denmark. Petersen became a foundation deacon (and later Life Deacon) of the Warwick Baptist Church when it was formed. He died in 1938 at the age of 82 years.

A third Dane, Anders Christian Jensen (or Jansen), who was not a farmer, went to Brisbane where he joined the Jireh Baptist Church. Jensen was a lay preacher in his home country, and for some time prior to 1886 he made regular visits to Freestone Creek and ministered to the Danish people there. The Jireh church arranged for him to be ordained as a Baptist Minister on 26 June 1884 with a view to serving his own people.

In September 1886 Rev William Higlett, then stationed at Toowoomba, visited the area at the request of the Danish Baptists and formally established ten Danish Baptists into a Baptist Church. The Freestone Creek Danish Baptist Church was admitted to the Queensland Baptist Association on 3 November 1886. Anders Jensen became the church's first pastor and he remained so until Jens Peter Hansen took over the role. Hansen was an



ordained pastor from Chicago, USA, where he had attended the Baptist Union Theological Seminary from 1887-1890. The Freestone Creek Danish Baptist church lasted for a little over ten years and eventually closed in 1897. It did not have its own building.

Mr Jens Christian Petersen was a foundation member of the Freestone Creek Danish Baptist Church and was its Secretary for the whole of its existence. He was listed as the church's delegate to the Baptist Association of Queensland Annual Assembly in October 1903. He was also active in establishing contacts with various Baptist pastors in the region. A number of pastors visited the Freestone Creek area at his invitation both before and during the lifetime of the Danish Baptist Church and after it ceased to exist. In addition to Rev William Higlett, visits are known to have been made by Rev William Richer, Rev T U Symonds, Rev J Glover, and Mr Walter Simmonds and Mr Stephen Glassop of the Preacher's Society.

### **'Harvest time'**

Despite great interest by the Baptist Association in church planting, there was no further progress at Warwick. In fact, the town and district had not developed as quickly as expected. Although established later than Warwick, Toowoomba attracted more interest and rapidly became the main commercial centre for the Darling Downs. But in the early 1900s, that was about to change. There was an increase in the population of Warwick and its surrounding farming areas, with accompanying economic growth.

Early in 1903, Rev William Richer reported to the Home Mission that at Warwick, with a town population of almost 4000, plus those living in the large farming area surrounding it, there was 'an abundance of material upon which to sow the seed of the Kingdom.' Two years later, now as Secretary of the Baptist Association, he informed the denomination that there was 'a little company of Baptist friends in Warwick, some of whom at least are longing for a church of our own order to be formed, if possible, in the town'.

Then in December 1905, it was reported that Rev William Higlett had re-visited Mr J C Petersen, who had by then purchased a property four miles out of Warwick. Higlett conducted a service at the Petersen home, which was attended by twenty-eight locals. He noted that there were several Baptist families in and around Warwick. So although he felt that the time was still not ripe for starting a church in Warwick, he was hopeful that the 'harvest time' might be drawing closer. Indeed, a local newspaper reported that those few Baptists did intend to form a church. (W Examiner 24/2/05)

A couple of years later, in 1907, there were further reports of cottage meetings and, with 'a good many Baptist families in the town', there was 'the hope of further developments.' Then Rev A G Weller from Toowoomba visited the group and 'reported most hopefully'. Prominent Brisbane Baptist, David Webster had endorsed the growing commercial prospects of the town by establishing a branch of his flourishing catering business in the town. (QB 12/09)

The 1907 Assembly was told that 'new work had been attempted' at Warwick, but that report was premature. However, two years further on, there was hope mixed with desperation. The Home Mission had given up waiting for the churches to raise more funds for

expansion, and was stepping out in faith by itself. An editorial in the *Queensland Baptist* May 1909 listed some of the successes so far, and the challenges that presented themselves, explaining,

Let it be noted for our encouragement that one or two of our most successful Churches have been established through the agency of the Home Mission Committee ... These, however, belong to other days, and whilst they afford a measure of satisfaction to subscribers, these efforts of the past must only cheer us on to courageously and cheerfully attempt new tasks and fresh conquests. What a field lies open to view!

Then a list of areas was given, which included this plea, 'When is Warwick to be occupied?'

The following year, the half-yearly Assembly was held at Toowong church and a series of speakers reviewed the work of church planting. William Richer was again advocating for Warwick. He said that the town was growing rapidly, especially with more railway lines being built providing greater access and economic benefit, and he 'earnestly urged establishment of a cause there'.

Then at the Annual Assembly, the President, Rev T J Malyon (Principal of the Queensland Baptist College) weighed in. He called for the establishment of at least ten new churches, claiming, 'Baptists are everywhere. In large centres like Bundaberg, Warwick and Roma, to say nothing of smaller places.'

The pressure was mounting. It was helped along locally by a mission in June 1911 by the celebrated American Baptist evangelist and temperance advocate, Dr John Quincy Adams Henry. Capacity crowds, especially of men, attended services in the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches and in the Town Hall. Henry's soloist and musical director for his extensive Australia tour was the young Queensland Baptist minister, Rev John Carnegie Farquhar (1887-1972), who went on to have a lengthy and influential ministry as an evangelist, pastor and denominational leader.

### **Breakthrough**

Finally the breakthrough took place. It was announced in September 1911 that the Home Mission Organising Secretary would visit Warwick where there were 'many earnest members of our denomination' (Sept 1911).

It did not take long for the promised visit to occur. On 11 October 1911 the Rev T U Symonds met with nine local Baptists in the Warwick Protestant Hall. (This hall adjoins the current Baptist Church building in Guy Street, Warwick and from 18 July 1981 became a part of the property of the Warwick Baptist Church.) He explained the program of the Home Mission—especially in view of population increases which included many Baptists. He believed that 'if they sent a good man to Warwick, a man filled with the Holy Spirit, the place would in a very few years become self-supporting.' (Warwick Examiner and Times 14/10/11) As a result, the meeting unanimously agreed to ask the Baptist Association of Queensland to form a Baptist Church in Warwick.

As well as population increase, another important factor in this decision to start work in Warwick was financial. The Home Mission Committee had announced in *The Queensland Baptist* 1 October 1911 that it was

seeking to raise £770. Of this amount £150 was to be for the first year of work at Warwick.

### **Formation of the Warwick Baptist Church**

Meanwhile, the new President, Rev Ezekiel Barnett, was also outspoken about the need to commence work in Warwick. But almost immediately, Sunday 19 November 1911, he had the privilege of conducting the opening services in the Oddfellows Hall (later called 'Glennie Hall') in Albion Street. There were 24 adults present, 'along with several children'. In the morning service, which was well attended, Mr Barnett preached on 'Love that passes knowledge' (Ephesians 3:19). The evening service was plagued by heavy rain which limited the attendance. He preached on 'The song of the redeemed' (Revelation 5:9) and at the close of this service, the church was officially constituted, after which a communion service was held. Ten foundation members commenced the fellowship. They were: Mr & Mrs F Barton, Mr & Mrs J C Petersen, Mr & Mrs T Beasley, Elizabeth (Gran) Shaddock, Mrs G E Dix, Mr F T Bell and Miss N Barton. Three more were added soon after.

On the following evening, 20 November, the church members held their first meeting and elected their leaders. It was unanimously agreed to ask Rev F A Leeder, of Taringa, to become the church's first pastor. Mr F Barton became the church's first Secretary, a position he held until 1924, soon after which he left the district. Previously active in several other Baptist churches in Queensland, he owned a bookstore and was involved in many other local organisations including the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Prohibition League. Mr F T Bell was appointed the first Treasurer, serving four years after which Mr T Beasley took on the role for a ten year period from 1914 to 1924.

The major factor which had delayed the establishment of the Warwick Baptist Church for so long is evident from a statement made by Mr F Barton in *The Queensland Baptist* of 1 March 1912. He wrote:

The establishment of the Baptist Church in Warwick was not the result of a few days or weeks deliberation, but has come to pass after years of thought and prayer...It was also not without the feeling that we were breaking away from true Christian friends that we separated from the denominations with whom, for want of our own, some of us had worshipped for quite a number of years.

He was referring to the Presbyterian church with which he had served, and also the Methodist Church which had hosted others. Despite losing parishioners, both these denominations publicly expressed their best wishes for the Baptist work. (WE and T, 27/1/1912)

### **Pastor F A Leeder – 1912-1915**

Rev F A Leeder commenced his ministry in Warwick on the first Sunday in January 1912. He had family connections with the district—his father-in-law was a Presbyterian minister living at Yangan nearby. The induction service was held on 25 January, and was conducted by the President of the Baptist Association, Rev Ebenezer Barnett. There was a large congregation in attendance, and in the evening a welcome social was held with Mr G P Barnes MLA presiding.

Mr Leeder, a Scot, had spent a year in the Training Home, Dunoon, Scotland and a short time in the Bible

Training Institute, Glasgow, after which he was an evangelist in Scotland for five years. Although he was a baptised believer he worked with the Presbyterian Church on first arriving in Queensland. He began studies in 1909 at the Queensland Baptist College.

His first appointment as a Baptist pastor in Queensland was for an interim period of three months at Taringa Baptist Church. This was extended for a further twelve months and subsequently further extended. His appointment continued until his resignation to accept the call to the Warwick church. He was the pastor of the Warwick church until April 1915 when, with some recurring health problems, moved to the Tasmania. He served in a number of churches in that state and in Victoria until his death in 1953.

### **The Home Mission years 1912-1931**

Despite the hopes expressed for the Warwick church to be a virile work that would soon be self-supporting, the first twenty years were difficult. The nation was involved in World War I from 1914 to 1918. The Great Depression followed a decade later. Throughout this period the church relied on the Home Mission Committee to provide its pastors, and they were in short supply. Some remained for just a month or two, and the church was left without a pastor on a number of occasions, often for a period of several months. Personality, financial and health factors, as well as some family bereavements all played their part in the quick turnover of men.

However, the first Home Mission pastor, F A Leeder, provided a period of initial stability from January 1912 until April 1915. But between then and January 1927, when Rev C J Kajewski commenced at Warwick, there were 14 men appointed to lead the church.

### **Emmanuel Hall**

For a short period the church met in the Oddfellows Hall, but by March 1912 it was no longer available. A move was made to a large room above the Café Majestic, which was provided free of charge by the Brisbane Baptist businessman, Mr David Webster. However, the



**Emmanuel Hall**



church saw a need to start looking elsewhere to establish a more permanent footing in Warwick.

One property seemed suitable. Emmanuel Hall, located in Percy Street, previously used by the Brethren assembly. There was a period of negotiation for the building, at first unsuccessful and then an offer was made for the purchase price of £590. This offer, which was accepted, was regarded by the church as having 'all the marks of the Lord's intervention'. The lower part was enclosed to provide more space in 1914. Emmanuel Hall served the church until the current church building was opened in 1964.

### **The first manse**

The church's first manse was built by Mr Jim Shaddock for £492 on the corner of Percy and Guy Streets, a block of land that was purchased in 1920. At the official opening on 29 November 1924 Mr Shaddock, the husband of foundation member, Elizabeth (Gran) Shaddock, was congratulated on the fact that he and his volunteer workers had erected a fine building at a reasonable cost. Rev and Mrs R Y McAllister were the first to occupy the manse. In 1959, it was removed to make way for the new church.

### **Membership**

The official statistical returns during the church's first ten years show a doubling of the membership to 20 members by 1921, with a few rises and falls in between. Despite the changes in pastoral leadership, steady growth continued through the 1920s and by 1927, when Mr Kajewski arrived in Warwick, church membership had reached 38. Four years later when he left, it was 67.

### **The Women's Fellowship**

The Women's Fellowship commenced in 1912 with Mrs Edith Leeder, the wife of the first pastor, as its inaugural President, nine original members. The fellowship was always concerned with the welfare of the church and raised large amounts of money over the years through 'sale of work' and various other fund-raising measures. The funds were put towards assisting Foreign and Home Missions as well as helping with local church needs.

A notable contribution to the work of the Women's Fellowship was made by Mrs Lily Petersen, the wife of J C Petersen's son, Mr Charlie Petersen, and mother of Peter Petersen. She was Secretary of the Fellowship from its inception, for fifty-one continuous years.

### **Sunday School , CE and Choir**

The Sunday School commenced in 1912 and continued throughout the life of the church. Some of its many devoted teachers made particularly long and faithful contributions to the work of the school. Mrs Marj Terry, who died in office in 1961, served for thirty-three years. Mrs D Petersen worked, mainly in the Kindergarten, for around thirty years and Miss Joyce Lechner's service extended to over forty years.

One of the most popular activities of the school were the picnics. The first, under the newly formed Warwick Baptist Church, took place in 1912, less than 12 months after the church's formation. The children, teachers and parents, as well as members and children from the

Presbyterian Church, boarded a train at Warwick and travelled to Emu Vale for the picnic and returned the same way later in the day. Adult fare - one shilling (1/- or 10¢), children - free.



**Emmanuel Hall, modified**

church and an outreach opportunity as many of the children were from non-church families. Ice-cream, when it became readily available, was always a staple at the picnics.

Another important ministry for young people was Christian Endeavour. This was first suggested in 1921 but it did not commence until 1927 under the leadership of Mrs Roland Smith. Mr Tom Terry was appointed Superintendent of the Junior Society on 24 October 1934 and continued in this role until August 1980 – a period of almost forty-six years.

The church also supported a choir for some periods during the 1920s.

### **Outreach**

During the 1920s, the church also began to take responsibility for spreading the Word to other parts of its local region. The initial outreach from Warwick was to the south in the direction of Stanthorpe, sixty kilometres south near the NSW border. Pastors Jarvis, McAllister and Abbott took the lead in contacting people in this area. These were valuable contacts but they did not see the establishment of a permanent Baptist work until after World War II; the church at Stanthorpe was constituted in 1955.

The post-war period saw another church sponsored by Warwick, at Allora twenty-six kilometres to the north. This church was constituted in 1950, and closed its doors in 1970. Another area canvassed during Warwick's Home Mission period included Inglewood but this did not see any lasting fruit.

### **Pastor C J Kajewski and Independence**

Rev CJ Kajewski was appointed to Warwick in 1927 and would be the first to serve there for more than a few short years. He had a love for the Word of God and a desire to see the Word spread far and wide. He made a significant contribution to establishing a strong membership base at Warwick, which was his first church after ordination.

Rev Kajewski had been converted at the age of 15 years and became a Sunday School Superintendent at age 17 years. He moved from Victoria to Queensland at the age of 21 years and entered the Home Mission Service at Maleny. After training at the Queensland Baptist College he was ordained and, following his years at

From 1912 onward, Sunday School picnics were held annually and became one of the major social outings for the

Warwick, served at Newmarket, Kalbar, Albion, Nambour, Minden-Tarampa, Bundaberg and Monto. In retirement he pastored the churches at Brighton and Clontarf-Scarborough. He died in Brisbane in June 1969. Throughout his long ministry, he was respected as a gentle and humble person and was loved by young and old alike. (QB, July 1969 p 6)

Pastor Kajewski remained at Warwick until April 1931, by which time the church had become well established due to healthy growth during his four-year ministry. This growth can be understood when the following event is considered.

Early in his ministry Mr Kajewski held an open-air service in front of the church to inaugurate a mission to the people of the Warwick region. A flagpole was erected to fly the mission colours (red over black) and the church's oldest member, Mr J C Petersen, hoisted the flag, which remained until the mission concluded. Decorations in red and black, with a large sign "Christ above all" drew attention to the mission. In the evening service Pastor Kajewski preached on baptism and four young men and two young women made application to be baptised. Cottage prayer meetings were held during the six weeks prior to the mission.

The mission commenced on 16 October 1927 and lasted for ten days. The closing meetings of the mission were reported on in the local press as follows:

On Saturday night the Baptists joined the Salvation Army in a united open air meeting, after which both parties fell into line and marched in procession to the Baptist Church to the accompaniment of the band music. On Sunday morning the service was well attended. Several visitors from Toowoomba motored to Warwick in order to attend the closing meetings of the campaign...Rev Worboys took for his subject 'The threefold purpose of God in this age' and powerfully inspired his hearers to be keener servants for Christ and be prepared for His second coming.

By the end of Mr Kajewski's pastorate, the church had existed for almost twenty years and had established itself as a mature stable fellowship, able to stand on its own. On 6 March 1931 a motion was carried by the church meeting unanimously seeking independence from the Home Mission Committee. This was readily granted by the Baptist Union and fresh stage in the life of the Warwick Baptist Church began with the arrival of the new pastor, Rev William Doull, in July 1931. At last the promise of the early days, that the church would be self-supporting, came to fruition. The second promise, that it would take 'its due share in the Home Mission work of Queensland' would also be a reality, at least in the local area.

### **Maturity – ups and downs**

The succeeding pastorates saw varying fortunes for the church. The Depression years brought their own tests, as did the period of World War II when Warwick became a significant base for military activity. Led by Rev Ernest Edwards (1940-1946), the church faced its responsibilities of caring for local families and the many service people who passed through the city, many of them in the hospital.

A new surge of life and activity in the 1950s was led by the next pastor, Rev R G (Dick) Walker, who worked devotedly in outreach and growth. This was the time when early church planting efforts came to fruition with

the establishment of a church at Allora (constituted 1950). While this work served a useful purpose at first, with changing economic conditions, it proved to be not remote enough from Warwick and without a substantial population base, so it closed down in 1970. Much more successful in the long term was Stanthorpe (constituted 1955) which was further away and the centre of large community. It continued to grow and develop. There were also many other centres where services were held and Sunday Schools established but none of these saw a separate church commenced.

Despite dedicated members and church leaders, the membership of the Warwick Church gradually declined during the period from 1950-1980 from the war time peak of just over hundred. There was still a steady stream of baptisms and admissions to membership, but there were many people leaving rural areas and towns which were not to be replaced.

Persevering work by pastors and people saw the erection of a new church building in 1964 on the site of the manse and modifications to Emmanuel Hall, lowering it, removing the porch and locating it closer to the street. The Protestant Hall next door to the church was acquired in 1980. Proceeds from other property gifts had also



**The Protestant Hall**

assisted the financial position of the church.

Under the leadership of Rev John Churchward (1982-87) and assistant, R Koch (1985-1990), the church moved to a 'renewal' mode following the visit

of a pastor from New Zealand for a weekend seminar. Several different new outreach ministries were also attempted. Rapid growth occurred, and the membership exceeded 120 for a short time before dropping back again under 100. The organisational structure of the church was radically changed during this period to make it more suitable for modern conditions.

However, there were several people in the church who did not support some of the new approaches and in 1987 a group of more than twenty members moved to form a new church on traditional lines. The decision was amicably discussed, and Emmanuel Baptist Church was formally constituted as a member of the Baptist Union of Queensland on 24 January 1988. It met in another location in the city and was served by Pastor Donald Arch for two years, and then Pastor Derek Wheatley until it closed in 1991.

### **Promise fulfilled – a hundred years of service**

In 2011, the centenary was celebrated with a full program of activities and events. The church was able to look back on 100 years of witness and service with thanksgiving, not only for the progress and achievements but also its faithfulness during difficult periods and its resilience in re-growth and adjustment to new conditions.

These were all seen as strengths which empowered it to continue its ministry in the following years and take up new opportunities as they arose.