



# The Queensland Baptist Forum

The Journal of Baptist Heritage Queensland

No. 112 August 2022

## 23rd Baptist World Congress 9-12 July, 2025 in Brisbane!



Visit: [bwabrisbane.com](http://bwabrisbane.com)

Watch the Congress announcement: [youtu.be/4xE8WQW73M0](https://youtu.be/4xE8WQW73M0)

Baptist Heritage Queensland is holding discussions soon with other state Baptist historical societies to consider if together we can represent the resources on Australian Baptist church history, and if so, what we might offer to the planning committee: book launches, historical tours, photo displays, access to the archives, etc.

Watch this space for updates!

### BHQ Meetings 2022: 5 November (AGM)

2:00 pm at The Baptist Archives, QB Centre, 37 Redgum Place, Gaythorne

Zoom access available by arrangement

### **Baptist Heritage Queensland**

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Free to Members Others: \$7 each posted

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# The Importance of Maintaining Denominational Archives

by Pam Condie, OAM, DMin © 2022

As many readers will know, the Queensland Baptist Archives commenced under the oversight of Dr David Parker *circa* 1984. After some 40 years of dedicated work overseeing the creation and maintenance of the collection and its acquisition process, David retired in 2020 and now focuses on individual historical research projects as well as maintaining our digital archives. I commenced in the role of Archives Officer in mid-2020 and have been fortunate to have David as my mentor while I settled in.

Whilst many will undoubtedly be quite *au fait* with the purpose and function of the Archives, some readers may have a slightly fuzzy or incomplete understanding. Hopefully, this article will answer questions surrounding the *What, Why, How, Where, When, and Who*, of these Archives. Let's start with

## What

The Society of American Archivists defines the archival function as being 'dedicated to preserving the documentary heritage of a particular group'.<sup>1</sup> An archive houses a collection of the historical records of an organisation, an institution, a government, a country etc. The records to be saved are those that have been identified for preservation based on their significant cultural, historical, or legal value.

In its link to the Archives, the Queensland Baptist (QB) website provides a good summary of the denominational Archives' function, stating that

The Baptist Church Archives, Queensland, is the main repository for records of the Baptist denomination in Queensland. The archives consist mainly of records of the Baptist Union of Queensland (minutes, year books, publications, newsletters, photographs) although there are records of a number of (mainly defunct) churches. Most local church records are, according to Baptist administrative policy, in the hands of the churches themselves.

The QB Archives Manual reiterates this concept when it identifies the Archives as the 'central repository for the historical records of the Baptist Union of Queensland and its constituents'.<sup>2</sup> These historical documents are often unique because, ideally, archived records are the original documents – for example, the original signed versions of the organisation's minutes. There can only ever be ONE original, although there may be many copies.

## Why?

Some may ask, *why* does QB need to maintain this collection of old documents? Why does the QB Archives exist?

In answer let me say, 'Archives matter because they hold much of our personal, corporate and social memory'.<sup>3</sup> These records are a vital resource for anyone seeking to ascertain the facts surrounding a particular issue or event. People visit the archives to gain access to the denominational collection, seeking to ascertain 'firsthand facts, data, and evidence from letters, reports, notes, memos, photographs, and other primary sources'.<sup>4</sup> Put simply, the QB Archives exists to oversee the acquisition, preservation, classification and indexing of the 'available historical resources'<sup>5</sup> relating to our denomination.

These historical records are invaluable for historians and researchers, some of whose works may be published. Examples include an individual church wanting to write its history (usually to celebrate a significant anniversary), or when an interested historian seeks to write the history of denominational ministries such as camping, Mission to Queensland, Carinity, or other historical ministry arms.

The QB Archives may also be able to help with family history research. Past editions of *The QB, Year Books*, etc, often provide dates and data that assist family researchers with their quests. A link to a helpful guidesheet for family historians may be found on page 5 (see No. 15 on the list).

There may also be occasions when the organisation itself needs to determine particular historical facts. The archives may be able to provide evidential documents, for example, to assist in legal determination.

One example from personal experience related to a query regarding a supposed QB church in a Brisbane suburb. We were able to confirm that, whilst that particular building had been the home of two other Christian denominations during the years in question, it had never been a QB church.

To summarise, our purpose for acquiring and processing denominational records is to ensure the gathered resources are available for denominational requests, and *bone fide* research (including the possibility of future publication) whilst observing and working within the Australian Privacy Principles' framework.

## How?

The next question some may ask is *how* do archivists achieve their purpose? Hopefully, the following will

<sup>1</sup> Society of American Archivists, *What are Archives?* September 2016. On-line: <https://www2.archivists.org/about-archives>.

<sup>2</sup> *Queensland Baptist Archives' Manual*, 'I. Introduction', (Baptist Union of Queensland, Brisbane), 2020, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Society of Archivists, 'What Are Archives...And Why Do They Matter?' *Archives matter!* August 2007, 3. On-line: <https://www.archivists.org.au/documents/item/10>.

<sup>4</sup> The US National Archives and Records Administration, "What's an Archives?" *About the National Archives*, August, 2016. On-line <https://www.archives.gov/about/info/whats-an-archive.html>.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

satisfy such curiosity and provide an insight into the mysteries of archiving denominational history.

As already stated, the QB Archives collects, categorises, and stores the history of our denomination in order to make the collected data accessible to *bone fide* enquirers. This ongoing process includes collecting the annual records from all QB ministries, services, and Charter Groups. These records (both paper originals and born digital) are categorised, indexed, filed, and are available for future reference and research. Examples include minutes of the original Association of Churches that became the Baptist Union of Queensland and is now known as Queensland Baptists. The history of this journey may be found in our Archives, recorded in bound volumes containing our denomination's original minutes.

Included in our collection are the minutes from our ministry and governance departments including the QB Board, Board Committees, Admin Services Group, Charter Groups (for example, BapLink, Carinity, QCCC, Malyon), Mission to Queensland, Youth, Kids/Families, Pastoral Services, to name a few. As well as these, the Archives is also the repository of QB documents covering policies, governance, structure (including organisational structural changes, for example, 'Baptist Union of Queensland' rebranding as 'Queensland Baptists').

Answering 'how' also includes more of the

### 'What'...

Other significant documents stored in the QB Archives include:



*Rev Frank Stone  
(former Secretary,  
General  
Superintendent,  
President of the  
Baptist Union)*

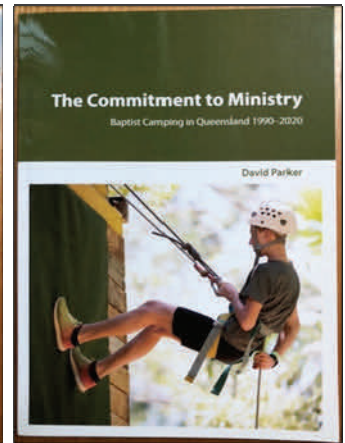
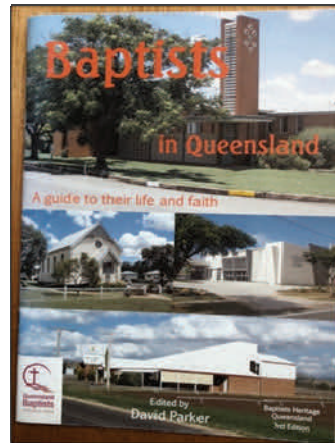
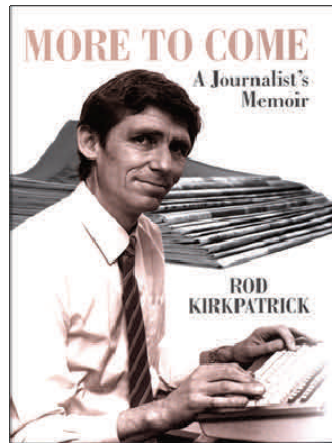
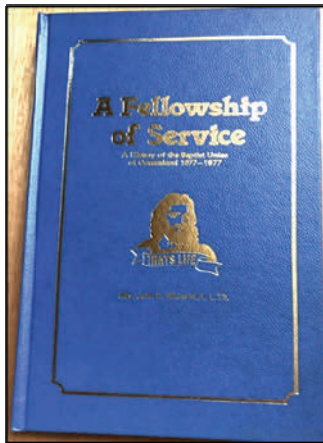
*Mareeba Baptist  
Church*



*A 1907 memorial plaque from the City Tabernacle, commemorating the late Queen Victoria.*

- **Constitutions** – these documents enable researchers and historians to map changes within the denomination as well as local churches.
- **Records of various denominational reviews** – namely organisational, ministry departments, Charter Groups, and denominational personnel.
- **Changes to denominational governance** – a prime example is the move from having an 'Executive Committee' to a 'Board'.
- **Denominational leadership changes** – examples include office of 'President of the Union' being dropped in favour of the 'Board Chair'; and more recently, replacing the General Superintendent role with two positions: Director of the QB Movement (DoM) and the Director of QB Services (DoS).
- **Notifications of individual church operational status** – for example, when planted, opened, constituted, applied for QB membership, date admitted, any name changes, mergers, or closure notifications.
- **Individual church records** and histories; biographical materials of those involved in QB ministries.
- **Ministry Departments and Charter Group** historical records – for example, Carinity (formerly QB Care), Malyon (BTCQ); QCCC (Camping); MTQ (Home Mission); Baplink; Baptist Youth Fellowship.
- **Photographs** – church properties, people, events.
- **Significant historical events** – Papers and programmes from Assemblies, College graduations/events, induction of pastors, anniversaries:
- **Audiotapes** of keynote speakers – addressing Assembly events, Conventions, Youth rallies.
- **Social issues** – Any documents/papers dealing with QB's responses (for example, euthanasia; marriage); pandemics (for example, the Spanish Flu in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; Covid-19)
- **Biographies, histories** – covering QB, interstate Baptist denominations, Australian Baptists, Baptists globally.
- **Books** and papers published by individual Queensland Baptists – for example, the recently published book *Forgotten Covenant* by Ryan Watson.





*A Fellowship of Service* by John White

*More to Come: A Journalist's Memoir* by Rod Kirkpatrick

*Baptists in Queensland* by David Parker

*Commitment to Ministry* by David Parker

- **Histories and Memoirs** published by Queensland Baptist people.
- **Research Theses** – both paper and electronic copies of research papers/theses undertaken by members of the Queensland Baptist constituency.
- **Publications** – including *The QB* (Queensland Baptist magazine), *Year Books/ Directories/ Handbooks*, *Annual Report Books*, *The Australian Baptist, Network*, *GSUD*, *DoS Rundown*, *The Hub*.

In many ways, the QB Archives is a veritable Aladdin's Cave of denominational and individual church history.

Most of the above has focused on archiving denominational records for posterity, but we also need to stress the importance of preserving the history of individual churches. These churches are the Queensland Baptist denomination.

### Local church records and histories

Individual churches can enrich the archives immeasurably by supplying copies of their own records or historical publications to the Archives at different points.

Two significant reasons to do this are the link your church records provide between the future and the past.

In *looking to the future*, churches are preserving invaluable data for anniversaries in the years to come.

When we *look to the past*, and ask questions concerning our local church history, we are able to learn lessons for the future.

The big advantage of providing the QB Archives with local church records is that, in a worrying proportion of instances, an individual church's own records may be lost. Due to a variety of circumstances, some church records may be found to be somewhat incomplete (unless that particular church has been meticulous in developing its own archives). Even more concerning is that some church records may be even totally lost (or destroyed) at some point. This is when the QB Archives can function as the backup!

None of us knows what events may be hovering over the horizon. It is far easier to err on the side of caution and ensure that significant records are residing safely in the



*The Queensland Freeman* (first edition January 1881)



*The Queensland Baptist* (January 15, 1960)

Archives than to lose irreplaceable documents because of flood, fire or other unanticipated event. This quote provides a hint of the importance of keeping records up to date.

Nothing is long ago in an archive, my dear.  
In the records we treat the dead as same as the living. That's the whole point of keeping papers. It doesn't matter if it's a hundred years or only a few weeks. It's all filed away, fresh as the day it went under the covers.  
(Sara Sheridan, *British Bulldog*)<sup>6</sup>

The Archives page on the QB website provides a FREE handy comprehensive list of resources for you or your church. (<https://www.qb.org.au/our-ministries/queensland-baptists-archive/>).

These include the following Guidesheets:

1. [Baptist Church Archives Old - a Guide](#)
2. [Baptist Church Archives Register \(CAR\) form](#)
3. [Creating, preserving, managing your records \(Australian Baptist Ministries\)](#)
4. [Managing Local Church Records-brief](#)
5. [Managing Church Records-detailed](#)
6. [How to set up & manage Digital Archives](#)
7. [Digitising Church Records-general](#)
8. [Digitising Church Records-step by step](#)
9. [How to Archive Emails](#)
10. [Your Local Church Treasure](#)
11. [What local church records should be kept?](#)
12. [How to research & publish your church's history](#)
13. [Resources for compiling a local Baptist church history](#)
14. [National Baptist Archival Protocols \(2014\)](#)
15. [Baptist Archives and Family History: A Guide \(2018\)](#)
16. [What to do with old church records?](#)

We have dealt at some length with the questions of *Why*, *How* and *What*. That leaves just the *Where*, *Who* and the *When* to be answered.

### Where are the QB Archives housed?

You will find us in the  
QB Centre, Ground level, Building 4  
53 Prospect Road, Gaythorne, Queensland 4051.

We occupy two rooms – and are rapidly outgrowing them!! (Ideally, we would like a museum to display many of our historical items, for example, Honour Boards, banners, photographs, and paintings.)

### Who are the denominational archivists?

The Archives is staffed by a team of volunteers:

*Dr Pamela Condie, OAM*

Archives Officer (general oversight including responding to queries and other requests; accessioning newly acquired records; updating indexes; writing reports; organising storage space).

*Dr David Parker:*

Digital Archivist and researcher.

*Bill Hughes:*

Denominational historical research projects with a view to publication; Bill is currently researching the history of the Queensland Baptist Home Mission.

*Anne Cameron:*

Archives research projects (classifying, updating and indexing church and pastoral data).

*Dr Rod Kirkpatrick:*

Church history research and developing individual QB Church chronologies.

Whilst the Archives is currently entirely staffed by volunteers, we aim to work to accepted professional standards in providing a safe, and current, storage environment for the documentation of our denominational history.

### When are the Archives accessible?

*Pam Condie*

Wednesdays (10.00am–2.00pm)

Other times by appointment

*David Parker, Bill Hughes, Anne Cameron*

Wednesdays 8.30am–11.30am

*Rod Kirkpatrick*

By appointment

In closing, I'll leave you with this observation from Joan Schwartz, archival specialist professor of art history at Queen's University, Canada:

Through archives, the past is controlled. Certain stories are privileged and others marginalised. And archivists are an integral part of this story-telling. In the design of record-keeping systems, in the appraisal and selection of a tiny fragment of all possible records to enter the archive, in approaches to subsequent and ever-changing description and preservation of the archive, and in its patterns of communication and use, archivists continually reshape, reinterpret and reinvent the archive. This represents enormous power over memory and identity, over the fundamental ways in which society seeks evidence of what its core values are and have been, where it has come from, and where it is going. *Archives, then, are not passive storehouses of old stuff, but active sites where social power is negotiated, contested, confirmed.* (Emphasis mine)<sup>7</sup>

Contact us: [archives@qb.org.au](mailto:archives@qb.org.au)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/archives>

<sup>7</sup> Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, "Abstract", *Archives, Records and Power: The Making of Modern Memory*, in *Archival Science* 2:1-19, 2002. (Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 1. Online <https://journalofburmesescholarship.org/pprs/SchwartzCook-Archives.pdf>



## ***Humble Beginnings: Three Active Churches Circling Brisbane with Strange Stories of their Buildings and Locations***

by Rev Dr David Parker, MA, BD, PhD © 2022

Three churches about 50 km apart at the points of a triangle sitting over the Brisbane Metro district had very humble beginnings. They are North Pine at Murrumba Downs, Kruger Parade at Redbank and Cleveland in the Redlands district. Since their establishment nearly 60 years ago, they have had a variety of buildings and more than one physical location – and surprisingly their humble original buildings have been re-purposed and still exist – one on the original site and the others re-located.



### ***Kallangur/North Pine***

Up in the north, Kallangur Baptist Church (now known as North Pine), an outreach of Margate Baptist Church, had its origins when it was realised there were many Baptist families with children in the area. So from early 1963, a couple of local Baptist families began transporting children to another of Margate's outreaches at Deception Bay, about 10 km away. The number of children increased rapidly, so it was decided to commence a Sunday School at Kallangur itself (and later church services). These proved to be well attended and a promise of greater things to come.

The first site, in use from 15 March 1964, was the CWA Hall in Anzac Avenue near The Crescent. Then in October 1964, land was purchased nearby at Andrew Street (and Boardman Street) and the old Petrie Court House, dating from 1878, was purchased for £50 and

moved onsite at a cost of £350. Renovations, including an enlarged porch, cost a further £1200. This building was opened as Kallangur Baptist Church on 27 February 1965. The church was constituted on 7 December 1969 and was known as North Pine from 1 January 1978.

The old court house soon proved inadequate, so a second building was erected on the site and opened 13 July 1976. In the master plan, this structure was intended to be supplemented with yet another larger building. In 1982 the court house was given back to the community and now sits at Old Petrie Town with its original porch restored.

However, it was soon realised that the Andrew Street site would not accommodate the needs of the church into the future, so a new location was sought, and in 1982, A 2-acre lot was purchased about 3 km away at 44-46 Ogg Road, Murrumba Downs. The Andrew Street property was sold to the Lutheran church.

As a temporary measure in October 1982, the church moved into the famous Space City Shopping Centre further along Anzac Ave, now the site of the Woolworths. This was an innovative multi-dome concrete construction using the 'Binishell' method. Although hailed as 'international attraction' when it opened in April 1979, it proved to be a problematical project due to roof leaks between the shells and so it was demolished in 1985. However, it was a worthwhile temporary home for the church until the necessary permissions were obtained for the Ogg Road property. The auditorium was designed by Ross Smith, a local Baptist builder who had played a leading role in the earlier building works of the church, and construction was by volunteer labour. This new project was an urgent job because the lease on the Space City location was cut short.

The first stage of the new site, set back from the street, was ready for services on 20 November 1983. Additional land has also been acquired and two further buildings were constructed in 1988 and 1996 (one in front and one behind) to provide a large and practical home for the church which has a reported membership of around 150.



*Kallangur Baptist Church*

### **Gailes/Redbank Plains/Kruger Parade**

Meanwhile in 1964, down to the southwest, the church at Dinmore had decided to support the pioneer work of one of the Baptist families (formerly of Rosalie) who had started a Sunday School in their home at Gailes, about 8 km back towards Brisbane. There had been a Baptist ministry at Dinmore since the mid-1880s which had seen many fluctuations in its strength, but there had been positive developments in the 1960s, including a new modern building on their Brisbane Road site.



*The ex-army huts at Gailes*

The Gailes Sunday School was part of this renewal and flourished strongly. After 2 years, worship services were started and a block of ground was purchased at 26 Braggan Street in the Mapleridge Estate, the same street as the home-based Sunday School. Then 2 ex-Army huts were moved onto the site. They were renovated and joined at the front with a large besser block porch and foyer area to make a practical church centre, with one wing used for services and the other for Sunday School and other functions.

This building served its purpose for several years. However, it eventually became unsuitable and so in 1976 a move was made about 1 km to Old Logan Road on a new block of ground just opposite the corner with Baker Street, on the northern edge of an area now known more generally as Camira. The old Braggan Street property was disposed of, but it still exists more or less in its original form as a private dwelling.

Meanwhile, the new single-level besser block building at Old Logan Road became the centre for the church, which was constituted on 20 November 1977. There were often thoughts about relocating westward about 2 km to the more central area of the Goodna shopping district around Queen Street. However, nothing like this eventuated.

Instead, by the mid-1980s, another fellowship had grown up several kilometres to the southwest in the Redbank Plains area and met at first in a community hall in Susan Street Redbank Plains. It was known as the Redbank Plains Baptist Fellowship. It was soon realised that a merger of Gailes and Redbank Plains was desirable and about 1987, the new combined Gailes/Redbank Plains Baptist Fellowship began meeting in a variety of schools and public buildings.

A 10-acre block of land was purchased at the corner of Henderson Street and Kruger Parade, about 4 km by road back towards Goodna, more or less centrally located between the original Gailes church and Susan Street, upon which a large building was erected and opened 2 August 1992. This has been the home of the thriving Kruger Parade Baptist Church since, with a membership of around 150. It also covers a wide area in the region southward towards Augustine Heights, beyond which is the Springfield area served by two small Baptist fellowships.

The Dinmore church's surge in growth did not last and it closed in February 1985 after almost 100 years of ministry. The building was made available to the First Nations people, at first under the leadership of Pastor Mark Kickett, which bravely served in the area from 1987 to 2015. The property, including the original 1888 and the 1961 buildings, fully renovated, is currently the home of a Wesleyan Methodist Church.

The Old Logan Road building still exists with only a few changes to its appearance as a karate club, and adjacent is a mosque.

### **Redland Bay/Raby Bay/Cleveland**

Now to the southeast point of the triangle. The current Cleveland church has been located at 240 Bloomfield Street, about 30 km from the Brisbane CBD, since the late 1970s. However its origins can be traced back to 1902 when people in Redland Bay, a very small semi-isolated farming community, 10 km to the south, began meeting as a Baptist fellowship. They were served on a weekly basis for many years by members of the Baptist Preachers' Society, who made the arduous journey from the city by train and bus to conduct services.

A church building seating 80 people was opened on 5 August 1906 on land at 40 Queen Street given as a memorial to one of the young Baptist men of the district who had died trying to save others in a boating accident. The church was constituted in December 1906. The modest building, which was renovated and improved over the years, was situated in a picturesque location amongst the rich red-soil farms distinguishing the area, enjoying views over Moreton Bay, which later included a flying boat base.

The church benefitted at the beginning and for years to follow from a substantial group of German Baptists who had been meeting in the area since the mid-1880s as an outstation of the strong churches at Minden and Kalbar. The church was later served by Home Mission (HM) pastors and indeed by HM superintendents Reverends TU Symonds and B Hewison themselves. It became known for its 'splendid record of keen spirituality and consecrated service'. The church was a strong supporter of overseas missionary work, having sent out a number of its people to serve as missionaries and on the home front. For some time in the 1930s it was linked to the



Wynnum church, and over the years various outreaches were made into other areas, including Mount Cotton.

After the World War II, the area about 15 km north around the historic centre of Cleveland (once considered as a possible capital of Queensland) began to develop as a commercial centre. In those days, what is now the business centre of Cleveland was known as Raby Bay after the section of the Moreton Bay immediately to the north. 'Cleveland' itself was further to the east out to the point with its famous lighthouse and the original harbour. The railway line, which had been in place since the 1880s, had three stops in this area, the middle one being known as Raby Bay, about where the current Cleveland station is situated. (This line was closed in 1960 after 70 years of service, and the current electrified line, opened in 1987, follows more or less the same track but does not go as far east.) Raby Bay then was a swampy and tidal mangrove area, a far cry from the current up-market canal and waterside area known as Raby Bay today, which was developed from the 1980s.



Far-seeing Baptists began looking at ways to minister in the area and by the mid-1950s services had begun, followed in 1959 by a Sunday School using rented facilities. The pastor for much of this period, Rev RY McAlister, donated a site at 13 Doig Street in the middle of the growing business district. A small but functional church building was erected as an outstation of Redland Bay. Known as Raby Bay Baptist Church, it was opened on 20 February 1960. There were also plans for a manse in the district as well. The combined work was known Redland Bay-Raby Bay Church, although in time the name of Cleveland began to be used for the newer part. Then in 1964, Raby Bay Baptist church was officially renamed Cleveland Baptist Church and the original Redland Bay became Redlands.

By the early 1970s, when the development of Cleveland was starting to accelerate, it was time to separate the two churches, although it was reported that some people had decided to leave and start a new church of their own. Cleveland was constituted as a new church in 1974 and it was led at first briefly by Rev HE West and then for a long period by Rev J Kitson.

As the Doig Street site was not well located for growth, being in back section of the commercial district, a new location was chosen, about a kilometre away to the south at 240 Bloomfield Street, where a large 250-seat building was opened on 30 August 1975.

The church grew strongly and an additional building was erected in 1990 for youth work. Attendance climbed to around 500. Further strong growth resulted in a large new modern church building, opened 20 November 2009.

Outreaches to other development areas in the greater Redlands district also took place at various times, including Russell Island in the mid-1970s and Victoria Point in the mid-1980s. Separate fellowships had also grown up at Capalaba and North Redlands, which merged to become Birkdale Baptist Church. The Redlands church merged with Victoria Point in 2001 and the almost century-old church building at Queen Street was sold. It was eventually moved to Point Talburpin Park where it is used for community functions. Meanwhile, the Doig Street building was sold to the local council in 1974 to make way for commercial developments in the area. It was moved to Redlands Softball Park in Sturgeon Street, Ormiston, where it was modified substantially and is now the headquarters of Redland Softball Association.

The Cleveland church reached a maximum of around 250 members in 2000 and again in 2013 but has since declined in number significantly. The churches at Victoria Point and Birkdale continue to thrive.

### **Humble Beginnings**

So this is the brief story of three churches which had humble beginnings in regard to their buildings and at different sites that have grown to be effective works in modern capacious buildings serving their communities to the glory of God. Surprisingly, each of their very modest original buildings are still in existence (two of them at other locations). There are, no doubt, many other similar stories about Baptist churches around the state – let us hear about these humble origins too!

*There are, no doubt, many other similar stories about Baptist churches around the state – let us hear about these humble origins too!*



# Baptist churches and ministers in Queensland: Trends over the last 20 years

by Rev Dr David Parker, MA, BD, PhD © 2022

## Introduction

The twenty-year period from 2002 to 2022 was quite distinctive for the Baptist Union of Queensland – a relatively stable time in terms of its activities and leadership – and one that was both introduced and terminated by major reviews and subsequent extensive organisational changes. This provides a neat period in which to review the trends in the numbers of churches and recognized ministers.

According to information given in the annual Baptist Union Handbook (or, Directory, reverting to its original title since 2011), the number of churches grew from 168 to 219 and the total number of ministers from 336 to 445.

## Retired ministers

Perhaps the most distinctive figure of all is the number of retired ministers, which doubled from 67 to 129, or about 20% to nearly 29%. The surge began in 2008 when the system for recognizing ministers (see below) was changed significantly. An earlier surge took place in the early 1980s. Interesting questions are raised by these figures – are retired ministers now living much longer than earlier on? Are they retiring earlier and so creating a larger pool? (If so, why? Health? Disillusioned or lost their call? Overwhelmed by rapidly increasing bureaucracy? Are they coming from other states to retire in Queensland?) In late February 2022 the Baptist Union put out feelers about ways of engaging with this large bloc of retired ministers,

the first such move since the cessation of the Retired Ministers' and Wives' Fellowship that had operated successfully until about 15 years earlier.

The data (see figure 1) was calculated in February 2022 and took samplings at five-year intervals. These are now the only data made available publicly. Statistics on membership, baptism, finances, property and other matters, which have been collected from the churches by the Baptist Union annually since 1877, have not been published since 2008. The only indication of the timing of the data printed in the current Handbooks is the cover date, but that is clearly not the date of the data. Even when the more detailed information was published, there was no indication that the dates of the collection of the two sets of data were the same, and typically the numbers of churches in the two lists did not match, which makes full analysis difficult.

Another important consideration in this exercise is to note that, over recent years, the annual publication of the Baptist Union has changed. Originally, it was an authentic Yearbook with detailed information about the structure and relationships of the churches and other Baptist organisations. It is now simply an alphabetical directory of people, churches and organisations related to the Baptist Union, and in general, little detail is given about the status and links of the entries.

The information in the section labelled 'Ministers & Pastors' includes not only the ministerial status of the

person and their contact details but, since 1963, has also contained more detailed information about their qualifications and training, and previous and current ministry positions. However, this information is not always complete or even presented, and full names of the entrants are not used, meaning that accuracy and usefulness of the data is often severely limited. This is a seriously regrettable situation because this list seems to be the only official record of recognized ministers of the denomination.

## Churches

The data for churches is simpler than that for ministers, and so makes a good starting point. Typically, each entry provides the name and

| Data about recognized ministers, Baptist Union of Queensland, Directories 2002-2022 |      |      |      |      |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Year                                                                                | 2002 | 2007 | 2012 | 2017 | 2022 |
| Total                                                                               | 336  | 372  | 393  | 430  | 445  |
| Retired                                                                             | 67   | 75   | 83   | 115  | 129  |
| Non-local                                                                           | 27   | 19   | 12   | 10   | 12   |
| Past Ass                                                                            | 2    | 8    | 2    |      |      |
| Student                                                                             | 56   | 55   | 17   |      |      |
| Prov & Sup                                                                          | 2    | 10   | 28   | 12   | 34   |
| Min Ord                                                                             | 128  | 161  | 70   | 2    |      |
| Min Unord                                                                           | 54   | 44   | 25   |      |      |
| Reg Min                                                                             |      |      | 59   | 145  | 117  |
| Reg Min Ord                                                                         |      |      | 97   | 146  | 153  |
| Min                                                                                 | 172  | 205  | 95   | 2    |      |
| Reg Min                                                                             |      |      | 156  | 291  | 270  |
| Total Reg and Ord Mins                                                              | 172  | 205  | 251  | 293  | 270  |

Figure 1. Data about Ministers recognized by the Baptist Union of Queensland 2002-2022 taken from the annual Directories of the Baptist Union of Queensland.

address of the church, service times, contact details and the names and positions of pastoral and administrative staff.

Up to 2012, church names were listed without any categorisation as to type, although sometimes the term 'fellowship' was used. This word used to be the official designation for a fledgling church that was still not strong or stable enough to be considered a fully functioning church entitled to membership in the Baptist Union of Queensland in its own right. A 'fellowship' would have been planted by a nearby church as an outstation of some kind, or it might have been planted directly by the Baptist Union. People supporting a fellowship would hold their membership (if any) in the mother church.

Furthermore, even by 2002, the old convention of naming a church simply by its location (such as 'Allensville Baptist Church') had already been changing and the term 'Fellowship' was one that was sometimes used instead of 'church'. The 2002 Handbook contains names of both official fellowships and of churches which use that word in their title without any distinction, so it is impossible to determine the exact status of a church including the word 'fellowship' in its name, of which there were 20 in the 2002 listing. (The statistics for that year show 15 fellowships!)

By the time of the 2017 Handbook, a new system was in operation, and the churches were designated according to three categories: Constituted, Phase 1 and Phase 2. The latter two, more or less equivalent to the former 'fellowship', were stages in the growth of new church plant towards full independence – the initial beginning stage for Phase 1, and a much more mature level for Phase 2 – in fact, almost ready to be recognized as a church and a

member of the Baptist Union. In that year, there were 157 churches, 34 at Phase 1, and 9 at Phase 2.

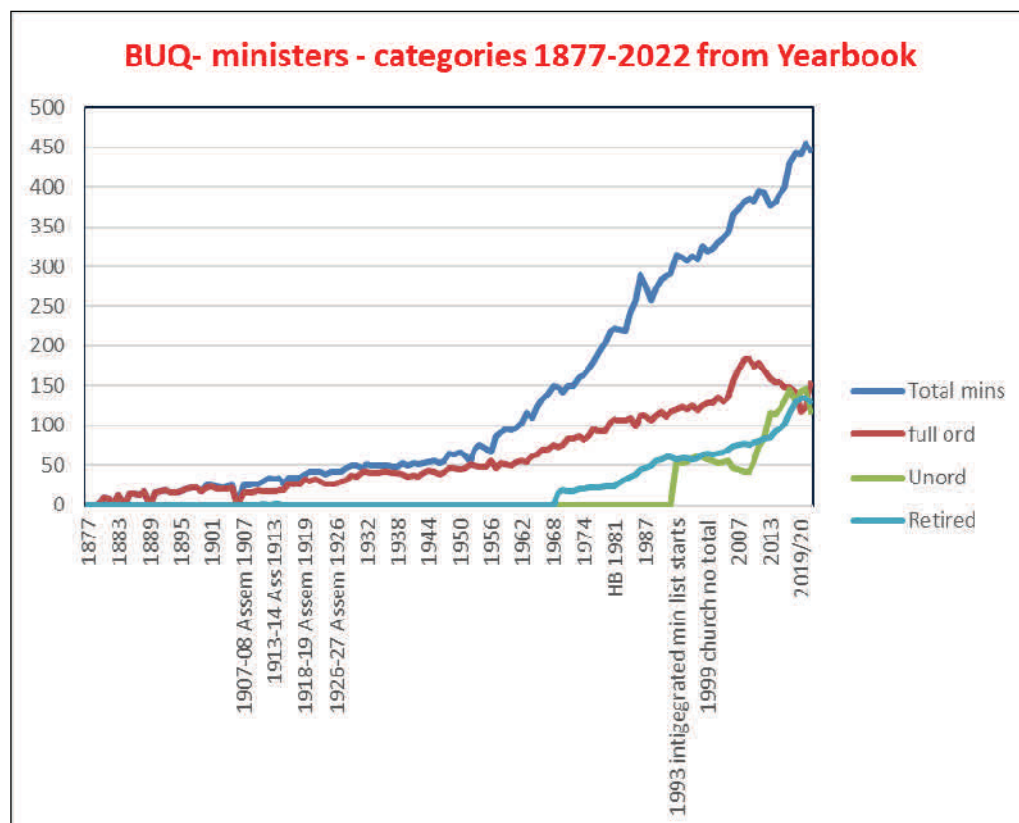
By the end of the next five-year period, yet another system was in use. There were now 159 churches and 37 'associate' churches (roughly, a combination of the former Phase 1 and Phase 2 categories). There was also another new category of 'simple' church (8 in number). These were defined in the Baptist Union Constitution as 'groups of a Baptist nature that lack the resources to become a Member Church' but could benefit from some Baptist Union services by being recognized as such. (They were categorically not members of the Baptist Union, so they are not included in this discussion.) In addition, there were an additional 8 churches listed without any designation, but these were thought to be associate churches.

These figures show that the growth in fully-constituted churches over 20 years was only modest (136 to 159). In the last five-year period, the numbers of churches and church plants were more or less static (157 to 159 and 43 to 45). This suggests that there was a considerable problem in bringing church plants through to full maturity, and that in reality church growth was nil.

Membership figures were published in 2002 standing at 12,416 (as at 30 June 2001), and only 10,827 in 2007 (as at 30 June 2006). But it is to be noted that 25% of churches did not submit returns, so this figure is more or less useless).

## Ministers

The publicised data for ministers officially recognized by the Baptist Union is complicated due to many categories of minister and several changes in the classification scheme (see figure 2).



The gross figure (as stated above, 336 in 2002 and 445 in 2022) is an increase of 32%. The figures reported to the annual Baptist Assembly (although not every year and not able to be reconciled with the Directory data) show a similar increase – from 344 to 452, or 31%. The total number is probably larger because it is known that some retired ministers have not maintained their accreditation and so do not show up on the official lists.

However, this gross figure needs to be analysed in more detail to obtain a better picture of the situation, and to see how many fully qualified ministers actively serving in local church have been officially recognised.

Figure 2. Selected data about Baptist Ministers recognized by the Baptist Union of Queensland 1877–2022 taken from official reports and Yearbooks/Directories.

Over the years there have been different categories of recognized ministers. As well as 'retired', there have been ordained, non-ordained, students at various stages of study and recognition, those serving outside the local churches such as missionaries (whether with Baptist missionary organisations or others) and those in other non-denominational ministry positions. Strangely, recognized ministers serving in a Baptist Union of Queensland denominational position have never been categorised separately (currently there could be more than 20 in this grouping, including part-time positions).

To get a clearer picture of the numbers of active fully recognized ministers, we can first separate out those who are retired (67 in 2002 and 129 in 2022), leaving 269 in 2002 and 316 in 2022. Then we can remove those who are classed as 'missionary' and in 'special service': 27 in 2002 and 12 in 2012 (not listed in 2022), a considerable drop on historic figures suggesting a far more parochial attitude existed. In 2012 there were 2 designated 'provisional' recognition, but this jumped to 28 in 2022. There were 56 students in 2002 but this category did not appear in 2022.

Traditionally, those who are fully recognized ministers would have had the status of 'ordination' but since 2007, ordination has been an optional extra (requiring further study and experience, bringing with it the courtesy title, 'Reverend', and attracting a higher level of recommended remuneration).

Thus the current listings include registered ministers ordained, 153, and registered ministers unordained, 117. (It was after this change that the surge in the number of retired ministers occurred.)

Before the advent of 'Registration', there was a capacity for non-ordained and largely untrained men to serve as fully recognized ministers, but these were typically in a special category, usually older men or men who had a significant period of full-time ministry behind them (perhaps as an evangelist or missionary) for whom the full rigours of the ordination training course were not considered appropriate. Some instances of all these various categories appear in the published lists currently. In 2002 there were 128 ordained ministers, and 54 unordained.

So overall, the number of normal fully qualified recognized ministers (excluding unqualified, retired, and various special categories) changed from 128 + 54 + 2 (184) to 153 + 117 (270), an increase of 46%, which is well over the increase in the total number of churches (168 to 219). This probably reflects the strong trend during the period to staff-run churches and the decline in volunteer ministry (and general involvement in church affairs)

exercised by church members, a development which is surely to be classed as a 'mixed blessing'.

Some Assembly reports for these years contained statistics for the numbers and categories of ministers, usually dated to 30 June of the previous year, but these figures are difficult to reconcile with the data published in the Directory. However, there is one more category of interest revealed in the reports of 2020 and 2021 which does not appear in the Directory, viz, Defence Force Chaplains, 10 in number each of those years.

### **Women in ministry**

The other category of interest is female pastors. Contrary to the situation in other states and overseas, women in Queensland are not permitted to be ordained. In 2002 (and earlier), women who were in ministry and seeking accreditation were placed into a category known as 'pastoral assistant', of which there were 2, although in 2007 there were 8 but in 2012 the number reverted back to 2. In the 1960s there had been a flourishing deaconess movement which had contributed significantly to the life and ministry of Baptist work in Queensland, but it had not survived.

However, with the advent of the system of Registration, women could be registered in the same way as men, although they could not go on to ordination. So the category 'pastoral assistant' was absorbed into 'registered minister unordained.' In the current lists, there is no way of determining whether a person is male or female, but it is believed there may be about 22 women in the 2022 list, or 5% of the total.

### **Summary**

So in summary, there are currently 159 listed churches with 270 fully qualified ministers registered, a change over 20 years from 168 churches and 184 officially recognized ministers and pastoral assistants. This represents an increase of 1.1 fully recognized ministers per church in 2002 to 1.7 in 2022. By comparison, a century ago the ratio was typically far less than 1 minister per church.

There has also been a change from ordination as the regular standard of ministry to Registration (which, incidentally, allows for women in ministry to be recognized) and also a vastly more complex process for the initial accrediting of ministers and for their continued recognition. From 2020, a full-time position was created within the Baptist Union to manage these processes.

A century ago there were 3,202 members, 43 churches with 30 ministers, and at the 50-year mark, the figures were 80 ministers, 117 churches and 7394 members (see figure 2).

## ***Baptist Heritage Queensland AGM***

***5 November 2022***

***2:00 pm at The Baptist Archives, QB Centre, 37 Redgum Place, Gaythorne***

***Zoom access available by arrangement***