



Baptist Historical Society of Queensland Newsletter

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Free to Members

Membership: \$5 per annum \$8 family \$20 corporate

PRESIDENT: Rev. Dr David Parker
26 Hall St Alderley Q 4051 Phone 356 9331

SECRETARY: Mrs. E. Chataway
11 Bunda St Slacks Creek 4127 Phone 208 2639

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

In this final issue of our Newsletter for 1989, we are pleased to report on three new books which have appeared in recent months, adding to the published record of Baptist history in this state. Two tell the stories of churches - one as young as 21 years - and the other is the autobiography of one of our senior ministers. The Society welcomes these volumes - particularly the latter. It would be great contribution to the understanding of the growth and development of the denomination if there were a richer supply of personal memoirs. The article on caring for church records is intended to encourage churches to be good stewards of their heritage.

Another prominent feature of this issue is the focus on the Baptist Community Service. Earlier in the year, some interesting material was published in the the Service's Newsletter and in The Queensland Baptist on the occasion of the announcement of the sale of Clifford House at Ascot and the relocation of the aged care operation to another site. Community Service work is an important part of the denomination's more recent ministry and we are pleased to present some highlights of its development. Thanks is expressed to Audrey Thomson for her research.

We also report on the Annual Meeting of the Society and announce plans for the future. As indicated in that section, we are looking for an increase in the number of active members so that the work of the Society can be extended, and the future assured.

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WYNNUM BAPTIST CHURCH

75th Anniversary 1914 - 1989

Wynnum Church has published a 24 page historical review on the occasion of its 75th anniversary. It is rather unusual because of its concentration on photos - half the book is devoted to a series of half-page reproductions, including the Shire Clerk's cottage and the Shire Hall where the first services were held (under the name of "The Wynnum Baptist Mission" from 1910), various phases of the church building, the removal of the church in two parts from the original Edith Street site to Bay Terrace, manses and the four outstations (Lota, Lindum, Wynnum West and Manly).

The remainder of the book also features a large number of small reproductions (a couple of centimetres square), focusing on the buildings and the ministers.

The text of the book is divided into two distinct parts. The first, telling the story of the buildings, appears to be the script for a slide presentation given on the occasion of the anniversary celebrations; the photos in the book are reproductions of those slides.

The second part of the text is called "A brief resume of the pastorate from 1914 - 1989." It too appears to be the printed record of a presentation given during the anniversary. There have been ten ministers - from Rev. R. Lauchlin (1914-5) to Rev. A.P. Brady, B.D., L.Th. (1982-). The longest serving have been Rev. Gray Parker (1920-35), and Rev. E.E. Edwards, L.Th. (1946-69).

This is an effective anniversary memento, but unfortunately, the slide reproductions are not always clear. However, it is to be hoped that some day a more complete history of this successful church can be written, discussing in more detail some of the significant developments that are only hinted at in this brief work. For example, the fact that the two lengthy ministries both took place in the immediate post-war periods (the 1920's and the 1940's) is worth investigating, while the significance of a church in a semi-independent suburban/provincial area like Wynnum is also a matter of interest. This little production joins another on Wynnum which was published in 1964 on the occasion of the 60th anniversary.

LAWNTON BAPTIST CHURCH

21st Anniversary 1968 - 1989

Lawnton is, in some respects, the opposite of Wynnum - geographically and in age at least. But it is also similar - a vigorous and effective church with a keen sense of purpose and ministry. Its 36 page history is full of photos, charts and diagrams illustrating the text which covers the story of the church from the original vision of Rev. Vic Bowring as Home Mission Superintendent through to the present. With its tables of statistics, listings of programmes and names of committees and officers, the book reflects a busy, active and confident church. The striking aerial picture of its surrounding district with the locations of the church marked on it which forms the frontispiece together with the population and membership growth chart only serve to emphasise the positive approach the church has towards its mission in the community. (cont. page 9)

The Unfinished Chapter

The Upward Call of God: Highlights of my Life and Ministry
by Ralph Welshman Hodgson

reviewed by Ellen Chataway

"Looking back, I would not change the story if I could."

With these words, a beloved "elder statesman" in the annals of the Baptist Union of Queensland reviews his story, spanning seventy two years. Migrating from Streatham, London, in 1927, the family settled in Clayfield, where his parents joined the church. The following year, Ralph, aged eleven years, gave his heart to the Lord at a combined Sunday School Rally at the City Tabernacle. Aged twelve, he was baptised by the Rev. A.E. Kirwood, and admitted to the membership of the Clayfield Baptist Church.

Always the student, during his time at Teachers' Training College, Ralph attended night school to secure his Senior certificate and University matriculation. Subsequently, he took night classes at University towards his B.A. degree. His training in school teaching helped overcome innate shyness. Sunday School teaching was important in this and other aspects of his development. By now, Ralph was worshipping at the Nundah Baptist Church, since there were very few young people at Clayfield.

As a country school teacher, he saw the great need of the people in the western areas of this vast state for the gospel message. With a like-minded friend, and without either training or financial backing, the two held meetings in various places. Generally, there was appreciation for what the young men had to offer. When the other partner decided to re-enter the work force, Ralph had to seek employment - and was advised to go farming! He states, with wry humour, that the main lesson he learned was that he was not cut out to be a farmer! So at age twenty two, Ralph became a Home Missionary, in charge of the Granville and Tinana Churches in the Maryborough district.

The 1938 year of the Baptist Theological College saw an exceptionally large intake of students - Ron Farquhar, Wilbur Fletcher, John Knights, Harold Nicholls, Dick Walker and Ralph Hodgson. Students attended lectures for one week a month from March through August. This was the year of the outbreak of World War II, and ministers' stipends were very low, with Student Pastors starting out on the princely sum of ten pounds (\$20) a month.

Ralph was ordained in March 1943 at a special service at Nundah Church. In May he married Jean Campbell after an engagement period of four years. (In those days, college rules forbade students from marrying before completing theological studies.)

Ministries followed at Maryborough (42-3) and Gordon Park/Geebung (43-8). It is of particular interest to note that apart from overall blessing in each of these churches, a significant response followed with regard to people offering for overseas missionary service - Nola Hodgkinson (Maryborough), Neville Kirkwood (Gordon Park) and Betty Salisbury (Geebung). All three served with distinction at East Pakistan (later Bangladesh).

Whilst at the Graceville Church (48-52), Ralph's wife of only eight years died quite suddenly. It was a great burden to bear.

During a three year ministry at Murgon (52-55) the Hodgson's had for the first time a rent free manse, a stipend equivalent to the basic wage and a very modest travel allowance. During this time he married Nola Hodgkinson and three children came to join the Manse family, along with big sister Heather.

Ralph bears testimony to the impact of Christian Endeavour on the life of the young people in all of his churches. He states that "many of our baptisms and admissions to membership came through the C.E. Societies."

Involvement in the work of the Baptist Union has been a feature of Ralph's ministry since the early days at Gordon Park. Applying the coined phrase, "response - ability" to the wider fellowship and ministry of the Christian church, led to his holding many positions, including membership in the Evangelistic Committee and the College Committee; he was also an honorary college lecturer and a past President of the Baptist Union of Queensland (1971-2).

A period of ministry south of the border (Griffith 55-60) saw more valuable experience in the Murrumbidgee area, and later, at Pendle Hill before returning to the Queensland in 1962. Nambour, Maroochydore and Yandina (62-66) saw the Hodgsons' obedience to Isaiah's injunction, "Hold not back, lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes." (Is. 54:2)

Ministry at Annerley (66-73), according to Ralph, consisted largely of a holding operation, since within its membership were a strong representation of Baptist Union officers including Rev. Frank Stone (General Secretary), Mr Eric Jones (General Treasurer), Rev Jack Munday (Youth Director), Rev. Gordon Martin (College Lecturer) and Mr Jack Barrie (Bookstore Manager).

As President of the Union in 1971-2, ninety three churches were visited; stage I of Resthaven Garden Settlement was opened, as was Bindari Lodge for girls at South Brisbane; a hall was opened at Scarborough and manses at The Gap, Clontarf and Labrador.

Ministry at Toowoomba Central followed (73-82). The church here reached its centenary in 1975 with a full month of celebrations. During this ministry, South Toowoomba gained its autonomy and Highfields was recognized as a Fellowship.

Retirement from full-time ministry came into effect in March 1982. Interim pastorates have been conducted since at Dalby, Carina, City Tabernacle, Enoggera, Sunnybank and Inala. In the early years of their retirement, Ralph and Nola were in membership at Sunnybank.

During 1985, when an Associate Pastor at Sunnybank, Ralph was hospitalised and during a surgical procedure, the alarming discovery was made that carcinoma had invaded several of his vital organs. Major surgery followed, from which he made a slow but satisfactory recovery. Ralph records his feelings at this time:

Within a few days, my confidence in my personal health was snatched away, but not my confidence in God.

(cont. page 9)

MILESTONE FOR CLIFFORD HOUSE

Early in 1989, it was announced by the Baptist Community Service that Clifford House, one of the first of the aged persons' homes conducted by the Baptist Union would be moving to a new location, after 34 years operation at Alexandra Road, Ascot. The Community Service devoted almost all of the March 1989 issue of its Newsletter to this topic, with excellent articles (and photographs) researched and written by Audrey Thomson of the Community Service office. The Queensland Baptist of June 1989 published an article by Irene Oliver on the same topic.

Clifford House, named for one of England's greatest Baptist social pioneers, was first established at Farrington House, Alderley in 1949 after Mr Ken Lethem had taken the initiative some four years earlier to urge the Baptist Union to "give consideration to the urgent need of launching into some form of social service." The four bedroom Farrington House was built in 1879-83 for Mr F.W. Wilson, a biscuit manufacturer and was named after a Berkshire village. It included a large lounge-dining room joined by imposing cedar doors and featured a marble fire-place and attractive lead-light windows at either end. With its hill-top location, wide verandahs and iron lace, it was well known as a district landmark, but was in need of considerable repair when it was bought by the Baptists in February 1948 for the sum of 3500 pounds. It was opened to its first three guests on August 17, 1949.

This was a major step forward for Queensland Baptists, and did involve considerable discussion about the question of receiving state aid for such projects. Historically, Baptists have insisted on complete separation between church and state, and in the light of this, in earlier times, especially at the foundation of Baptist work in this country, did not accept grants of land or financial support for ministers, as did other denominations. (The only exception was for the site of Bathurst Street church in Sydney.) After considerable discussion, it was decided that the nature of the government subsidy for aged persons care was different did not preclude Baptist acceptance of such aid.

The Alderley property served its purpose well, but it became apparent that more adequate premises would be needed. The Ascot property, which was first occupied by the Baptists in October 1955, was originally built perhaps as early as 1896 and was owned by Mr Thomas Sword, Land Commissioner. (His great-neice, Miss Hanby, now lives in Clifford House.) It was named "Carfin" after Mr Sword's home village in Lanarkshire, Scotland. According to an architect's report, the building is in good condition for its age, having been well built, and represents an unusually fine example of architecture of the time. (The identity of its architect is unknown.)

The report mentions in particular the location with its views, the front oriel windows, the hall, reception rooms and the staircase. The property had originally extended as far as Oriel Road, but by 1931 when a description was published, it had been reduced to about five acres. Long-since disappeared were the original schoolroom, an underground water tank and stable buildings. The site is now less than one acre in size; verandahs have been replaced and new accommodation buildings have been erected; inside, partitions have divided up the large rooms, although evidence of some of the striking fireplaces, joinery and plaster work do remain. The servants' areas have been substantially altered. (Cont. p 9)

Clifford House

A CHRISTIAN HOME FOR AGED PEOPLE

61-63 ALEXANDRA ROAD, ASCOT, N.E.2, BRISBANE . . . PHONE M 4493

CONDUCTED BY THE BAPTIST UNION OF QUEENSLAND

PLEASE RETURN WITH
FILM.

CHAIRMAN:
REV. A. H. HAWLEY, B.A., B.D.
HAWTHORNE STREET
ENOGGERA, N.W.7, BRISBANE
PHONE LM 4214

TREASURER:
PASTOR J. F. SULLIVAN
ALMOND STREET
NORTHGATE, N.E.2, BRISBANE
PHONE MU 2202

SECRETARY:
REV. A. J. W. CHISHOLM
87 GRACEMERE STREET
NEWMARKET, N.W.1, BRISBANE
PHONE LM 4290

THE CLIFFORD HOUSE STORY.

The story of Clifford House opens on the 17th day of March, 1947. On that date a number of interested persons of the Baptist Denomination addressed a letter to the General Secretary of the Queensland Baptist Union, "urging the Council to establish a fund for the provision of a Home for Aged People and to appoint a Committee to work to this end". It was pointed out that a number of our members were deeply concerned about the welfare of Aged and Infirm members of our denomination and desired to contribute to a Home for such folks. The signatories to this letter numbered twenty-nine with the memo that others desired to be associated.

On June 17th a meeting was held to report on this petition at which a Committee of three was appointed to meet and confer with the Union Executive representatives. Certain conditions were outlined relative to finance and other matters associated with the project. One condition emphasised by the Union was that no action should be taken until the Committee had £1000 in hand; Mr. K. J. Lethem offered to donate £500, provided that five other donations of £100 were forthcoming, three of these were ~~promised~~ promised at the meeting. Various properties were inspected but it was not until February 24th 1948 that a definite statement was made to the effect that premises at Alderley Heights had been purchased for the sum of £3500. To this property was given the name, CLIFFORD HOUSE, to honour the name of Dr. Jn. Clifford, the great B^ptist Defender of Social rights.

Some months passed before Guests could be accepted in the Home due to necessary negotiations with the Government authorities, City Council, and Union Officers, then came the structural alterations, and it was not until August 17th 1949 that the Dedication Service was held, the Official Opening took place on March 25th, 1950, the then Lady Mayoress, Mrs J. B. Chandler officiating. Clifford House, Guest list opened with three people, when the time came for us to move to larger and more convenient premises the number had risen to sixteen.

The film now depicting the Official opening of the present property at 61-63 Alexandra Road, Ascot, presents once again the evidence of God's provision. We knew how great was the need of a new property, the old building was a wooden structure, exposed to the four winds, far removed from regular transport; the Lord knew this also and in a remarkable manner made possible the purchase of the present Home, the cost of which including the alterations, amounts to just on £40,000, Government subsidies and the assistance of friends provided the necessary finance. With the present accommodation we care for 32 Guests, our aim is 100. Included in our scheme of things is the erection of a hospital and further accommodation blocks.

We leave the film to speak for itself, one point nevertheless is that Miss Wilkinson appears as Matron, she has since resigned, the present Matron Matron Johnston.

Copy of explanatory note accompanying Clifford House promotional film
(courtesy Baptist Community Service)

DOING LOCAL CHURCH HISTORY

The continued publication of local church histories is most welcome - and it seems that interest is growing. Of course, as the years roll by, an increasing number of churches are approaching a significant milestone in their history - such as 50, 60, 75 or even 100 years - and wish to publish their story. Some personal memoirs have also appeared.

The Baptist Union Archives contain about thirty church histories, while others have formed the project that theological college students have taken as their graduation thesis. Their works are housed in the college library. We want to collect all of the church histories that are available to complete our records as much as possible. Readers are requested to contact the Society if they have information which may help.

The first issue of this Newsletter was devoted entirely to the process of producing a local church history. It had articles on reasons for writing a church history, research and interview methods, organising your work and the printing process.

The Society intends to re-publish this material in a form that can easily be distributed to churches to help them produce effective and attractive books.

The Society also publishes an Inventory Sheet to assist churches in managing their historical records. It helps in the locating and categorizing of material and also in assigning of the records to responsible people for their proper care and control. A copy of the Sheet can be lodged with church officers and also with the Historical Society so that the information about the church's records and the policy on access to them can be known to those interested, such as bona fide researchers.

Churches which have not yet used this Inventory Sheet are invited to contact the Society for a copy.

CARING FOR LOCAL CHURCH RECORDS

Because there is no external church authority in the Baptist structure to lay down regulations about records, or very little obligation for reporting to a central denominational authority, record keeping is a matter for the local church. Thus, it varies quite considerably in practice, according to the local structures and the interests of the church membership and officers.

However, in a typical Baptist Church, the most important records will consist of minutes of members' and deacons' meetings (and another other similar administrative groups), and minutes (or other similar notes) of the various departments of the church (such as Sunday School, ladies and mens groups, youth and childrens organisations).

Closely linked with these will be any regular printed material, especially newsletters and weekly church bulletins. Although these might not be regarded as official records, they are valuable resources because they usually contain precise details as to times, dates, and places of functions and activities - details which are not always recorded in official minutes. Churches should therefore take care to keep a permanent a copy of each piece of published material. The same applies to reports presented to annual meetings if they are not made part of the minutes.

The membership roll will also form a vital resource, being the official listing of those who constitute the membership. Unfortunately, these rolls do not usually contain many personal details - sometimes not even addresses or full names. This makes it frustrating for researchers wanting to trace personal movements and involvements.

Correspondence and financial records should also be stored, carefully grouped according to date and organization. They should be clearly labelled and a listing made of the contents for ease of reference.

There are other records which should be carefully stored by the church, including marriage registers (unless these are considered the responsibility of the minister) and any records of baptisms, funerals and infant dedications that may be kept. Again, many churches do not keep full details of these occasional services, but sometimes records are kept of attendance at church services; a diary of church happenings would be a valuable asset as well.

Many ministers keep extensive records of people within their pastoral care, and a diary or journal of their ministerial activities, but these are not usually the responsibility of the church. In any case, they would be completely confidential and not available to researchers.

Photographs, audio and video recordings are also important historical resources. They should be labelled fully, and stored in ways that will prevent damage. It would be helpful if each major church event was officially recorded on one or more of these media, with the church ensuring that expenses were provided for the person undertaking the responsibility.

The church should establish a clear policy and set of procedures for keeping its records. For example, it should be clear who is responsible for keeping them (the long-suffering church secretary?), which records are to be kept and what allocations of financial and physical resources are available. There should also be a policy on access to the records. (For example, it would be normal to allow bona fide researchers to have access to all records except the most recent minutes on the condition that the records are handled carefully and full acknowledgement given.) Of course, there should also be a simple plan to ensure that the policy is carried out and that the leaders of the various church departments deliver the records to the archive officer on a regular and consistent basis.

Adequate provision should be made for the physical care of the records. First enough money should be set aside to provide a strong, preferably damp- and fire-proof repository, together with boxes, folders and binders that are necessary to store the material securely and neatly. (If the church cannot do this by itself, consideration should be given to handing over the records to an archival authority that can.)

An effective cataloguing system should be devised, so that all relevant records are kept together and can be located without undue disturbance. For example, it is normal to keep all records of a given organization together in chronological order; different types of records (e.g., financial, correspondence, reports, promotional materials) are then grouped together chronological within these categories.

Further information can be found in the book, *The Small Archive's Companion* available from the Church Archivists' Society PO Box 756 Toowoomba, 4350.

Lawnton (cont. from page 2)

The gradual development of the church is told simply, with an emphasis on those who made particular contributions - such as Revs. G.R. Dunshore and R. Euston, Messrs R. Walton and J. Tweedale in the early stages, and the present pastor Rev. Alan Cossgrove with his team of associates. Most have an illustrative photo, and there are several sketch plans showing the layout of the buildings at various stages in its history. The dates of important events are given, and in many cases, the names of participants. (For example, the 34 foundation members are all listed, almost half of whom are still in membership.)

There is also a useful chart of membership figures for each year of the church's life coordinated with pastoral leadership details, while a major proportion of the book is devoted to a description of the present ministry of the church, ranging from pastoral care and the Bible school through to missionary concern and the soccer club. Of particular interest is a page contributed by the Christian Endeavour members with a photo of the group surrounded by reproductions of handwritten messages and greetings from the members!

The book is attractively, if not lavishly, presented and, together with the Wynnum volume, makes a worthwhile addition to the collection of local church histories.

Rev. R. Hodgson (cont. from page 4)

He whimsically remembers that "... because of our respective roles in the Church, Pastor Gordon (the senior pastor) had all the weddings while I had most of the funerals."

Both Ralph and Nola had resumed activity in denominational work, with Nola president of the Queensland Baptist Womens' Fellowship 1983-5, and they visited Mission to Queensland fields at Middlemount, Tieri and Dysart. In the past year they moved from their first charming retirement home at Runcorn to the rolling hills of Jimboomba where they continue to exercise a gracious ministry from their country retreat.

This book presents a strong, clear message for all Christians seeking to follow that "upward call of God". A number of emphases are listed at its close, the first of which establishes a pattern for the remainder:

A truly pastoral ministry must be Christ centred and people centred, not just book centred or programme centred.

(Ralph Hodgson's biography is published by Ross and Chris Evans assisted by Dave Roberts, 1989)

Clifford House (cont. from page 5)

The property has been sold for restoration, the new owner being Mr Spero Conias, a director of Conias Apollo Real Estate. He and his family will occupy the property during 1990 and will spend a large sum of money to bring the building back to its original condition. In the meantime, Clifford House will be moved to yet another more suitable property.

SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

The Annual General Meeting of the BHSQ was held at the Baptist Union Archives on Saturday November 4 with eight members in attendance, and apologies from some others. It was noted that membership was still under 20 and that at this time no churches or other organizations were in corporate membership.

The activities for the year were reviewed, with favorable comments on the annual presentation and developments in the areas of published church histories. It was noted that there were some reasons for encouragement because of signs of a gradually increasing historical consciousness in the denomination.

Current projects were also reviewed. These include the ministers' file which is intended to provide basic information (e.g., dates of pastorates, training, special ministries) of those who have served as ministers of churches, especially in the early years. More information was also compiled for the "prominent Baptists" project, which is designed to provide a database of names and contacts of Baptists who have been prominent in the community. Help is required with both of these. Plans were developed for the "oral history" project, which is an attempt to gather information and insights from widely experienced and influential older Baptists using tapes and interviews. Many members and friends of the Society could help in this work, which has the potential to record valuable information for the future before it is lost.

The Society ended the year with a credit balance of \$182.69, which is an overall decline of about \$26 in reserves for the year. It was decided to hold membership fees at the same amount for the time being. Investigations will also be made concerning the future status of the Society in relation to the Baptist Union. The existing officers were re-elected for a further term. (See front page for officers and fees)

Plans are in hand for the 1990 program which will include the preparation of information for the guidance of churches on caring for and writing their histories, and an annual presentation focusing on the work of the Community Service ministry of the Baptist Union.

MEMBERSHIP

Individuals, churches and other groups are invited to support the Baptist Historical Society of Queensland by becoming members. Membership subscriptions are the only regular source of finances. Members receive the BHSQ Newsletter, and are able to join in the Society's activities and have a good opportunity to contribute to its historical work.

1990 SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE

Membership subscriptions for 1990 are now due. Please forward your subscriptions to the Treasurer, Rev. V. Chataway, 11 Bunda Street, Slacks Creek, 4127. Please urge a friend and your church to join and to participate in the work of the Society.

Unsigned articles in this Newsletter by the editor, David Parker.