

Baptist Historical Society of Queensland

# Newsletter

No. 23 April, 1993

Free to Members

Others - \$2 each

Membership: Individual \$6 p.a. Family \$10 p.a. Corporate \$20 p.a.

PRESIDENT: Rev. Dr David Parker, 17 Disraeli St, Indooroopilly, 4068 Phone 878 3178

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## Rev. J.E. White, OBE, MA, LTh - Thanksgiving

The Baptist Historical Society of Queensland joins with Baptists around the state and across the nation in giving thanks for the life, faith and ministry of John White who died on Tuesday, March 16, 1993 in his 84th year. He will be remembered for many aspects of his life, especially as a model Baptist minister - a gracious manner with deep, well thought out convictions, sensitive and spiritual, educated and articulate - but here we wish to pay tribute to his contribution to Baptist historical matters. He was the author of the official history of the Baptist Union of Queensland published for the centenary of the Union in 1977, a modern landmark ranking with the Jubilee volume of 1905 and an essential reference book; but he also wrote a short history of the Baptist Theological College with which he was associated in an administrative capacity for so long and an account of Baptists in Ipswich where he served as pastor 1952-76. These stand as tangible achievements of his work, but more than that, he was one who integrated a respect for and understanding of scholarly matters into his Christian living and ministry, which gave his ministry its enduring quality.

Accordingly, he was unofficial patron of the BHSQ, giving encouragement and serving as a model for our efforts. He graciously consented to chairing one of our best ever events, the Carey Bi-Centenary Lecture in May 1992, where his inimitable style shone through and helped to make the gathering a such a highlight in our work.

Thanks be to God for his gift to us in John White. May his example continue to inspire us.

*(Note: See back page for details of his autobiography. A full review will appear in our next issue)*

## BHSQ NOTES

We appreciate the ready response of members to the appeal for payment of current subscriptions. We are now financially solvent again! We are also grateful for the encouragement indicated by these subscriptions.

As of the time of writing, the Baptist Union still has not finalised arrangements in the B.G. Wilson Centre for the archives, which are therefore still boxed and inaccessible. Our major project this year was to be a function to mark the re-opening of the archives and the publication of an information booklet as well as other literature and seminars. Obviously, all this has been put on hold. When the archives room is ready, it will take a lot of work to get the material in order. We will keep you posted.

Please also note the new address (above) for the Chataways, our secretary and treasurer team.

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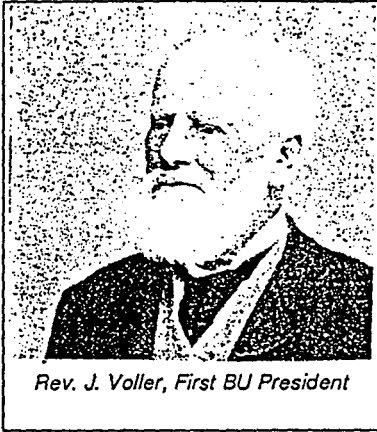
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## All the Presidential Men

by David Parker



Rev. J. Voller, First BU President

Does anyone take any notice of presidents of the Baptist Union? Yes, are not their messages at Assembly often enthusiastically received by the audience, as are their addresses as they visit churches throughout their year of office? But when they conclude their term and make way for their successors may be a different story! Their names used to be listed in the Baptist Union *Handbook* for all to see and remember - a record of their ministry and leadership. But the current 1993 issue has dropped the list. This is the latest in a series of useful items that used to be included but are now omitted. It is to be hoped that they can be restored soon.

In its role as a voluntary society established to foster interest and to encourage preservation of historical matters, the BHSQ draws attention to this unfortunate trend. This article contains the results of an initial study of the last printed list of presidents (1992 *Handbook*) to see what can be learnt from it about the Baptist

denomination in Queensland. It is hoped to carry the study further when the Baptist Union archives are operational again giving reader access to the addresses and other information about those who have occupied this office. (Of course, the list needs to be checked for accuracy of detail.)

The list commences in 1877, the year of the establishment of the Baptist Union. Since then there have been 118 presidential terms, including 1992, held by 96 different people. On 75 occasions, it has been held by an ordained minister, but from the mid-50's it has alternated between minister and layman quite regularly. Although he had been a student pastor and home missionary in the 1930's, John Llewellyn was listed as "Mr" when he served first in 1962 but, undertaking more ministry in later years, he was listed as "Pastor" for his second term in 1983, making him the only "pastoral" president!

All the presidents have been men, so it is historically correct and not a case of insensitive gender-exclusive language (which is of course completely unacceptable these days in this periodical as elsewhere) to refer to them all as "he"! In the new era of church life that is with us now we may expect to see the names of some ladies appearing. If not, the denomination may need to do some hard thinking about its integrity.

17 men have served more than one term (not counting the recent period when a two year term has been introduced), although two of them took up office mid-year and then continued on for the next full year. Two have had the privilege of serving more than two terms - three for Rev W. Poole (1881, 1889, 1906) and in Rev W. Whale's case, four (1887, 1893, 1894 and 1902).

The prize for the longest period before being re-called goes to Rev. W. Poole (25 years), although he had a second term after only 8 years; so perhaps it should go to Rev A.G. Weller with his 24 year interval (1904, 1928). Apart from those who served consecutive terms (Rev J. Voller 1877, 1878, Rev J.B. Sneyd 1895, 1896, and Rev W. Whale, 1893, 1894), the shortest period was two years - by Mr C. G. Sweetman (1947 and 1949). In recent years, Rev. R.E. Conwell and Mr P.J. Hancox both served twice;

Does the fact that these men have served more than one term mean that their services were so valuable that they were called back again by a grateful denomination? For some certainly, but other reasons especially, in the first 30 years or so, included a shortage of suitable personnel and sudden unavailability of the appointed person due to transfer, illness or death. In general, however, the office has been quite stable with only two occasions where it changed hands in mid-term (1909, 1937)

There have been five surnames repeated, with one or two signs of a dynasty emerging - Messrs A.A., G. and W.D. Grimes; Mr E. and Rev A.M. Hooker; Mr A.H. and Rev W. Richer; Rev F.T. and Mr W.R. Smith and Revs. J.E. and H. and Mr T.E. White. Interestingly, both the Richer's served two terms.

Some of the most illustrious names in the history of Baptist life are on the list, commencing with the pioneer Rev J. Voller and including William Whale, John Kingsford, W.H. Wingfield, T.J. Malyon, R. Sayce, A.E. Bickmore and J.C. Farquhar to name a few from the period before World War II.

Only four held any honours (two MBE, one OBE, one ED). No one held a university degree before Princ. T.C. Warriner in 1944, and there were only five more up to the time of the centenary in 1977 when

(cont. page 5)

## A HISTORY OF THE SANDGATE BAPTIST CHURCH.

by Joan and John Maxwell

Rev B.G. Wilson had come from England in 1858 to pastor the Wharf Street church, which was the first Baptist church in Queensland. He purchased 13 acres of land at Sandgate and built a home called "Rothesay". He was a young man with a love for God and a strong missionary spirit, and was responsible for opening several preaching stations in Queensland. While holidaying in Sandgate in 1868, he held an open air service which was well supported. This interest formed a nucleus for a new work at Sandgate. It was a long rough journey on horse back from Brisbane to Sandgate, but that did not deter this pioneer pastor.

In May 1870 a site was given by Hon. James Swan and a chapel was built in the following year. The first service in the new chapel was conducted by Rev. B.G. Wilson on Good Friday 29th March, 1872. This chapel, it appears, was located in Loudon Street behind the Osborne Hotel. The fellowship at Sandgate was under the authority of the Wharf Street Baptist church who supported them and assisted with preachers.

The Sandgate Baptist hall was used also for the local school for 47 pupils. Rev. B.G. Wilson was a foundation member of the first school committee formed in 1874.

In 1887 another piece of land was donated by Mr. George Phillips on the corner of Flinders Parade and what became known as Cliff Street. The present church building was erected on this site for a cost of £1,300 and its first service was held on Christmas Day 1887.

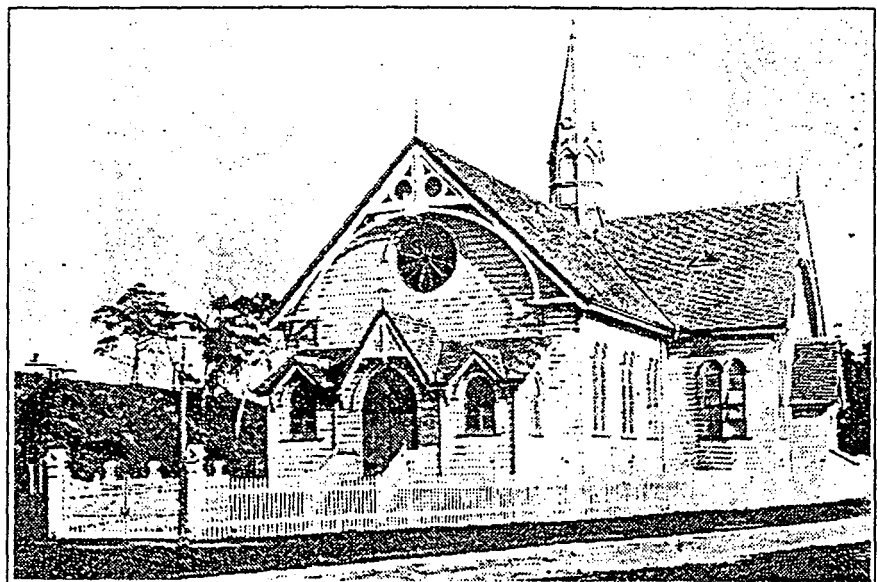
From this time Sandgate became autonomous and Rev. E.J. Welch became the first pastor of the newly constituted church and continued until February 1889. Because of the financial strain of repaying a large debt on the new building, the following three ministers stayed about three months each.

Rev. E.R. Makin took up responsibility of the Sandgate work in August 1892. Financial matters did not improve and he occupied the old hall as living quarters (free of charge) and was given the Sunday collections. The Bank informed the Trustees they were foreclosing on the overdraft and the Loudon Street hall was sold to pay interest due and reduce the loan. Rev. Makin resigned early 1894. The Treasurers statement showed at that time a balance of 12/7d (\$1.27) after expenses!

It was said that in the early days of Sandgate church, the service times were set according to the tides, as some travelled across the Bay to attend Sunday School and church. The late Mr. Reuben Lihou told a member that as a child he remembered seeing aborigines holding a corroboree at Sandgate when he came across to Sunday School.

In 1914 a small Sunday School was begun at Brighton in the home of Mr. A. Ward Snr., so the church, though struggling was looking beyond its own needs.

Rev. E.S. Moulton was called to Sandgate on 12th August, 1914. At this time the membership was 43. In October 1914 an Anniversary Service held for the first time. Rev. J.C. Farquhar was the speaker from Ipswich. When World



War II broke out in 1914, a Special Intercessory Service was held for "Our King, Our Empire and for Peace." A Roll of Honour was erected in the church naming the 7 young men who had enlisted.

In 1914 the land behind the church was purchased from church member, Mrs. Phillips and a hall was built in 1917.

In 1918 a service was begun at Deagon and the response was encouraging.

Mr. and Mrs. C.B. Fox set up the "Alex Fox Memorial Prize" to be given each year to a Sunday School scholar, in memory of their son killed in action. Treasury bonds of £20 were donated and the prize was to be paid for from the interest gained. The first winner was Charles Morgan, who became a Baptist Union President in later life.

In October 1918, Rev. E.S. Moulton resigned as pastor to join the A.I.F. The Sandgate congregation had more than tripled to 152 members during his faithful ministry.

By 18th March, 1918 interest actually paid on the outstanding mortgage of the £800 (\$1600) for the erection of the new church in 1887 was £1188.14.7d! And there was still a debt of £300 (\$600) owing.

In March 1919 Mr. A. Ward Snr. was leaving the district and asked Sandgate to take over the Brighton Sunday School he had held in his home. The Brighton State School then became the venue for the Sunday School until Brighton Baptist church was opened in North Road on 5th March, 1949. Twenty four members transferred from Sandgate to Brighton to establish the work there once the church was opened.

Rev. T.E. Ashworth was pastor in October 1923 at a time when the general public were pushing for Sunday sport. One of Rev. Ashworth's first duties was to write to the Sandgate Town Council and protest against "the Sabbath desecration on all public grounds."

Sandgate and Shorncliffe were becoming popular recreational spots. Open Air meetings were held by Sandgate Baptist to reach these crowds with the Gospel.

Rev. Arbon Hedley Abbott was inducted at Sandgate in April 1928. He was a zealous worker and Sunday School attendance rose to 112, while 27 attended either Junior or YP Christian Endeavour. Rev. Abbott also put much effort into the State schools.

The Great Depression was being felt throughout the country from 1928 to the late 30's. The pastor volunteered to have his stipend reduced from £6 (\$12) to £5.10.0 (\$11). The "poor fund" was still operating for the relief of the needy.

In 1930 Junior Deacons were appointed to the church. They were Cliff Rouse, Henry Gynther, Don Petman, Cecil Buchanan, Ralph Rutter and Watler Turner.

In February 1932 the church celebrated its Diamond Jubilee. A mission was conducted by Rev. J.C. Farquhar assisted by Silkstone Choir. 11 were baptised and 9 received into membership.

In February 1935 Rev. Abbott completed 7 years of fruitful ministry.

On the 4th October, 1935 the Hornibrook Highway was opened linking the mainland to the Redcliffe Peninsular. In the past Zillmere, Deagon and Brighton had been reached by the Sandgate Church, but now opportunities were available at Margate, Clontarf and Deception Bay. Their missionary zeal was such that churches were established at each of these places, and at Kallangur and Scarborough also.

Land was purchased at Duffield Road, Margate in March 1936 for a cost of £65 (\$130), and Sandgate donated their hall to Margate for a meeting place. The Hornibrook Highway was closed to traffic from 1am - 4am to transport the hall from Sandgate to Margate. All the required furnishings were donated to the new Margate work. The church was officially opened in May 1936 by the Sandgate pastor Rev. Robert Horn. Shortly after, Sandgate was able to acquire a replacement Sunday School hall from Albion.

Rev. E.V. Keith was inducted at Sandgate 6th March, 1938. He conducted regular services at Sandgate and one Sunday morning and evening once a month at Margate. The toll on the Hornibrook Highway for cars was 1/- (10c) each way. That may not seem much, but one dozen eggs could be bought for much less. Sometimes he would ride his pushbike to cut down on costs, and went visiting as far as Deception Bay. Rev. Keith concluded his ministry at Sandgate in February, 1942.

During the war period social teas were organised after church Sunday nights. These were attended by Australian and allied soldiers and airmen from the RAAF base at Eventide.

In November, 1946 Rev J.C. Farquhar was welcomed as Sandgate's new pastor. A manse was purchased and opened 20th August 1955 at a cost of £2,200 (\$4,400).

Girls Brigade was commenced in 1956 and Boys Brigade commenced in 1963.

Rev. J.C. Farquhar completed 10 years of ministry at Sandgate in September, 1956 and Rev. A.J.M. Howard was inducted 26th May, 1957.

Visitation was commenced to the Eventide home and a Men's Society began. In July 1968 a new hall was opened to seat 100 people at a cost of \$8,000. There was a vibrant youth work at Sandgate during Rev. Howard's 12 years of ministry which concluded June, 1969.

A new manse was purchased at Deagon for \$11,250 in time for the arrival of the new pastor, Rev. F.W. Andrews who arrived February, 1970. In June, 1970 the centenary of Baptist Witness in Sandgate was celebrated. This also marked the 83rd Anniversary of the present church building and autonomy of the church. The Keswick Conventions were first held in the Sandgate Baptist church in 1971.

In July 1972, 2 1/2 acres of land was purchased at Brackenridge for \$10,000, with a view to commencing a work in that area. \$6,500 of this amount was a 5yr interest free loan from the Nundah Baptist Church. Services were commenced at the College of Advanced Education at Brackenridge in August 1980, independent of Sandgate, and a new Brackenridge Baptist church was opened in Norris Road in 1986, where the work continues to flourish.

The ministry at Sandgate has fluctuated over the years and in 1992 it again came to Brighton's assistance and supplied a pastor when that work was too small to support a pastor of their own. The work is building up and strengthening at Brighton as they are being nurtured and supported by Sandgate.

The present membership at Sandgate is approx. 130 and the members are striving together to continue the witness in that area.

#### Sources:

1. *A Fellowship of Service* by Rev. J.E. White.
2. *Sandgate Baptist Church* - Sandgate and District Historical Society, by Mr. W.O.J. Keilly.
3. *Minimum Opportunity calls for Maximum Effort* by Rev. E. Keith.

#### (from page 2) Presidential Men

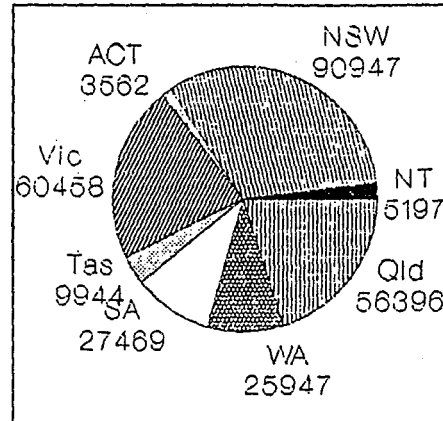
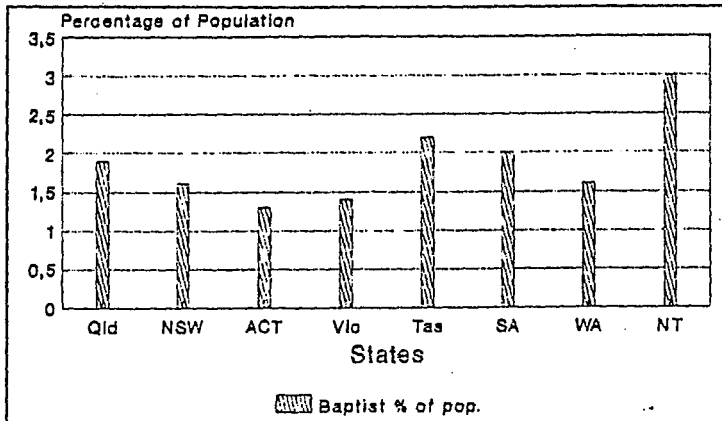
Rev. F.J.C Stone, BA was appropriately given the honour of being president. Only one person with a doctorate has been president, Dr E. Gibson. Theological degrees have been rare - (3 BD's), but LTh and DipRE diplomas became common from the 50's (17 all told). Almost everyone since the mid-60's has held a degree or some other qualification, but some were not mentioned in the printed list; this may have been an oversight, but perhaps there was some reason for it. A number of laymen held professional qualifications, especially in the area of accountancy; a chemist, two medical practitioners and one legal person have held the office as well. Only two presidents have been JP's. (NOTE: According to the 1966 Census, the number of Baptist men in Queensland who were university graduates was exactly equal to the overall male population in the state at 10 per 1000; but Queensland as a state was well below the national average for all men, as well as for Baptist men (both 16 per 1000) - all other states apart from Tasmania were above the national male average. Source: Hans Mol, *Religion in Australia*, 1971 page 168)

The themes of presidential addresses make interesting reading, giving an insight into Baptist thought. To judge from the printed list of titles (often verbose in the early years), it would seem they have focused mainly on the denomination, its distinctives and mission, especially evangelism; devotional themes have been prominent, particularly in more recent years. War was addressed in 1915 and 1916 (but not during 1939-45!). This appears to be the only moral issue on the list; similarly, not much has been said about Baptist involvement in the community, and even less about public religious, Christian and social issues. Evidently, presidential addresses (once given at the end of the term) are considered good for inspiring the faithful, not for dealing with pressing issues relating to the life in the public arena.

# Counting Baptists

by David Parker

The 1991 Australian census figures have just been released, and together with the Baptist Union membership returns, they make interesting reading. The graphs on this page tell the Baptist story. The highest proportion of Baptists is to be found in the Northern Territory where the percentage is now 3.0%, up from 1.3% in the previous census! Tasmania and South Australia come next, with Queensland following closely behind. Overall, Baptists make up 1.66% of the Australian population, up from 1.26% in



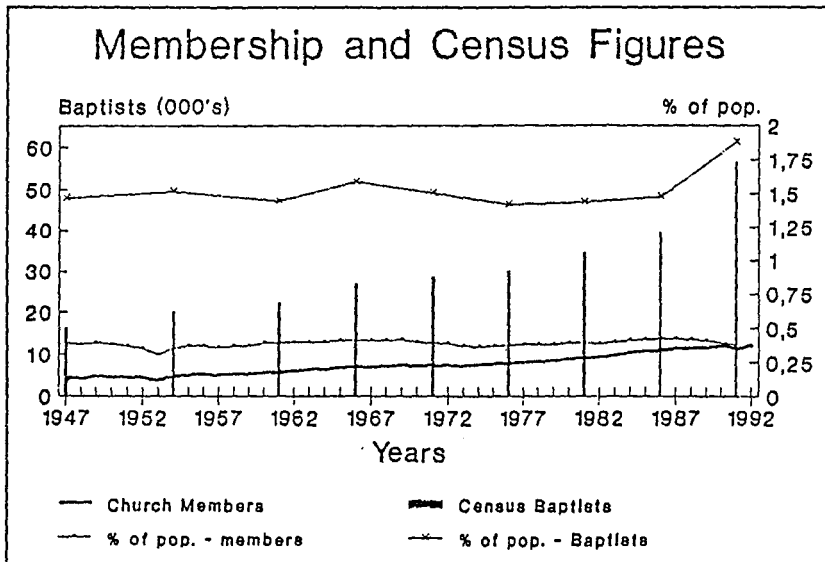
1986. NSW has by far the most Baptists, but Queensland is chasing Victoria in this as in other statistical matters, but its proportion grew faster than Queensland's.

In Queensland, the percentage of Baptists has increased sharply from 1.5% at the last census to a record 1.9%; this, of course, includes children and those who are not members of Baptist Union churches. If the actual membership of Union churches is considered, the percentage has declined slightly from 0.42% to 0.38%, taking it below average. However, the actual number of members is growing, having reached 12,433 in 1992, spread across 138 churches, giving an average of 90. (Multiply by about 1.5 to get the congregational size, according to figures in the 1993 Baptist Union Handbook.) In recent years, the average membership has climbed to match the figure of a century or so ago.

On the overall scene, Roman Catholics are the largest denomination in Australia with 4.6 million, exceeding the Anglicans at 4.02 million. There have been decent increases for the Uniting Church and the Presbyterians. Smaller denominations are not detailed in the census figures released so far, but Pentecostals as a whole have increased from 0.7% to 0.9% and Jehovah's Witnesses grew a little; the Churches of Christ and the Salvation Army have declined significantly to 78,000 and 72,000. Baptists are now more numerous than the Lutherans, while the Orthodox are larger again (475,000) and growing slightly.

The overall Christian numbers are up marginally from 73% to 74%, with NSW, Queensland and Tasmania being the most "Christian" states. Buddhists, the Islamic community and other non-Christian

religions have grown to 4.35% of the population, equal to the number of Presbyterians. NSW and Victoria have the highest proportion of this category; we are low on the table and have only about 1/3 the number of Victoria. "No religion" is up marginally, but "not stated" and "inadequately described" are both down, indicating that people are more precise about their religious affiliation. (These groupings are about the same in size as the Anglicans.) So it seems that Australia is somewhat more religious in 1991 than in 1986!



## Histories of Qld. Baptist Churches in the Baptist Theological College Library (1992)

The church or topic is listed first, followed by the name of book, thesis or paper as found in the library catalogue. Names of authors (where applicable) not shown.

- ABMS - The overseas missionary outreach of Queensland Baptist Churches
- Baptist Theological College - The history of the Baptist Theological College of Queensland
- Baptist Union - A Fellowship of Service
- Bayside - The Bayside Baptist Church - factors in its growth
- Boonah - One hundred years of ministry of the Boonah Bapt. Church 1887-1987
- Callide Valley - Baptists in the Callide Valley
- City Tabernacle Baptist Church, Brisbane, Qld. - Centenary 135th. church anniversary and centenary of the opening of the Tabernacle
- Dysart and Tieri - The Mission to Queensland in Dysart and Tieri - a sociological study
- German Baptist Churches - A history of the German Baptist churches of Queensland
- Gladstone Baptist Church - celebrating 25 years
- Ipswich - The Ipswich Baptists
- Jireh - The Formation of "Jireh" Particular Baptist Church, Brisbane
- Kalbar Baptist Church, 1875-1975
- Lanefield-Rosewood - History speaks - history of Lanefield-Rosewood Baptist Church
- Lawnton Baptist Church - 21st. anniversary, 1968-1989
- Maryborough - The centenary of the Maryborough Baptist Church - a record of stability - 1883-1983
- Nundah Baptist Church centenary history, 1888-1988
- Petrie Terrace Baptist Church - Centenary (1870-1970)
- Redbank - The church's ministry in the Redbank community
- Redcliffe - Development of Baptist witness on Redcliffe Peninsula
- Rockhampton - A reminiscent history of Rockhampton Baptist Tabernacle
- Rosalie - A history of the Rosalie Baptist Church, 1884-1984
- Rosalie Baptist Church
- South Brisbane - The history of the South Brisbane Baptist Church, 1937-1983
- South Brisbane Baptist Church - 100th. anniversary
- Taringa Baptist Church - the early years, 1889-1919
- Tent Hill - Centenary - Tent Hill Baptist Church - 1881-1981
- Tent Hill 100 years - a pastoral perspective
- The ethnic Church in Australia
- Toowong - The word grew - our life and times over a hundred years 1881-1981 - Toowong Baptist Church
- Toowoomba - The development of Baptist work in the Toowoomba area - the first fifty years
- Townsville - One hundred years of baptist witness in Townsville - 1888-1988
- Upper Mt Gravatt - The first 25 years of witness 1959-1984 Upper Mt. Gravatt Baptist Church
- Warwick - By Thy sovereign grace - a history of the Warwick Baptist Church, 1911-1986
- Wondai Baptist Church, 1912-1987
- Wynnum Baptist Church, 75th. anniversary, 1914-1989

## NEW BOOKS

At last . . . Volume 2

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## A MODERN PILGRIM

An Autobiographical account of the life and work of Rev. John E. White, OBE, MA, LTh

Won by conviction to his faith as a Baptist, he always found it satisfying. This did not restrict his fellowship with other churches, nor with the spirit of evangelism in the wider Christian context.

Whether as the doyen of Baptist pastors, working in local communities or as a teacher in the Theological College, or giving counsel and leadership, his work is enduring

Family, close friends and many in the church and community urged the publication of this story, completed before his recent death.

Cost \$15 (postage included)

*Cheques to "A Modern Pilgrim Book Fund" Reply Paid 2012, PO Box 12, Booval, Q 4304.*

## Publications of Interest

### *From the Baptist Historical Society*

*BHSQ Newsletter* - published three times per year - free to members - \$2 each posted

*Your Local Church History* - four page guide to preserving and presenting church or organizational history - free

*Inventory of Historical Records* - a sheet to manage and record the historical records of a church or organization in an orderly manner and to inform church and denominational officers.

*The Baptist Archives - A Guide* - to be available soon

### *From the Baptist Union of Queensland*

*Baptist Union Handbook* - details of Union officers and committees, ministers and churches - published annually since 1907 - since 1977, reports to the Annual Assembly have been printed separately

*A Fellowship of Service* - official history of the Baptist Union of Queensland, by Rev. John E. White, published in the centenary year of the Union, 1977 (250p)

*Queensland Baptist* - monthly news-magazine distributed freely to all churches