

Baptist Historical Society of Queensland

Newsletter

Special 10th Anniversary Edition

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

SECRETARY: Mrs Ellen Chataway, 45 Edinburgh Drive, Bethania, 4205 Phone 299 6494

Successful 10th Anniversary Celebration!

The success of the 10th Anniversary gathering of the Baptist Historical Society of Queensland, held at Annerley Baptist Church on Monday evening May 30, 1994, was a great encouragement for the future progress of the Society. The meeting was attended by an appreciative crowd of almost 50 people, including the President, General Superintendent and several other Baptist Union officials. It was also good to receive greetings from the Historical Society in Western Australia.

After a brief outline of the history of the Society by chairman, Dr David Parker, the first key-note speaker was Dr Les Ball, lecturer in Church History at the Bible College of Qld. Only a short time before he had received news that his doctoral studies at the University of Queensland had been successful, making him the first person ever to gain a PhD in Queensland Baptist history. He spoke on his topic of research, the 19th century Queensland Baptist identity. Well-known pastor and denominational leader Rev. Norm Weston then presented a thoughtful personal view of Baptist life in the last twenty years.

A discussion panel followed, chaired by Dr David Parker. It consisted of the Director of Qld Women's Ministries, Mrs Helen Smith, Rev. S.W. Nickerson, Principal of the Baptist Theological College and Rev. J. Sweetman, senior pastor of Bracken Ridge Baptist Church. Discussion ranged over causes of recent change, challenges for future development, the shape of churches and the denominations in the future, the ministry of women and the renewal movement. Some questions were raised by members of the audience.

In the supper area, a book table supervised by Pat Godman featured several current publications, including the successful *Baptists in Queensland*, BHSQ member Joan Maxwell's history of Baptist camping, and Rev. J. Knights' autobiography. Rev. M.C. Williams prepared a historical display of materials from the Baptist Archives which also proved popular.

NOTICE

The next meeting of the Baptist Historical Society will be held at the Baptist Archives, 518 Brunswick St, New Farm on **Saturday July 16 at 2pm** (please use rear entrance and arrive on time for security reasons). Rev. M.C. Williams will discuss his present "Cameo" research into the Grimes family. Other items on the agenda include the future program, BHSQ publications, and Archives developments.

We would like to welcome new members taking out subscriptions as a result of the 10th Anniversary function. Thanks is also expressed to existing members who have continued their support by renewing subs. for 1994. This gives us a good basis for continued activity.

This special anniversary Newsletter is 50% larger than usual to carry the text of the addresses on May 30. The next issue will also have some special Anniversary features, although it will be back to the usual size.

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Cameos of Early Queensland Baptists No 3

JAMES SWAN - Pioneer Baptist and Publisher of *The Moreton Bay Courier*

by Rev. Melvin C. Williams, B.Sc., B.D., M.A.

In James Swan, newspaper editor and proprietor, Mayor of Brisbane, Member of the Legislative Council and ardent Baptist, we have an example of a man rising above the unfortunate experiences of a bad childhood to make a success of his life. W. Coote says that before 1849 there were only two Baptists in Brisbane, later identified as James Swan and his wife. This, as John White has shown, is unlikely to be true, but they were the most visible ones.

After Moreton Bay (later Brisbane) ceased to be a penal settlement in 1842, it was opened up to land sale, but as Greenwood and Laverty indicated, there was little development after that. Moreton Bay was still part of New South Wales, and because of the distance and other factors, was neglected by the Sydney administration. When the Swans arrived from Sydney in June 1846, the population of the future Brisbane was just a few hundred. There was no great increase until the arrival of Dr John Dunmore Lang's three ships in 1849 with 600 new settlers.

James was born in Glasgow in 1811 as the result of a liaison between Daniel Swan, a private in the Highland Light Infantry killed in the Peninsular War and Jennet McLaren, a deaf mute. In August 1823, his mother was murdered by another woman in James' presence in a quarrel over a man. James, just 13 years of age, had witnessed the assault and gave evidence in court. He was described at the time as "diminutive in figure, thin and undeveloped in body, the head rather larger than usual, the hair fair, and the eyes blue-grey in colour were large and prominent." He was commended for his evidence with the result that a solicitor in court took charge of the orphaned boy. Later he worked in the lawyer's office, but was unhappy there. After a short time in the trade of carver and gilder he moved to the *Scots Times* office and served his time as a compositor. It is not known how James became a Christian, but it was probably through his wife's influence. In 1831 he married Christina Mackay who was brought up among the Scottish Baptists. She was converted under the preaching of Rev. T.W. Matthews and baptised in 1833.

In 1836, the Rev. Dr John Dunmore Lang visited Scotland on his lecture tour to secure "colonists of a high order" for New South Wales. The chance of a new beginning would undoubtedly have appealed to the young couple, particularly when Lang offered him employment in Sydney. They sailed with Lang on the *Portland* arriving in Sydney on December 3, 1837. They immediately became associated with Bathurst Street Baptist Church, the mother church. James served for three years on Lang's newspaper, the *Colonist*. After a brief, unsuccessful farming venture in the Wollongong district, he returned to Sydney. When the *Colonist* closed in 1841, he joined the *Sydney Herald*, followed by another brief flirtation with farming. He was persuaded by Lang to go to Moreton Bay, where he and his wife arrived in June 1846 as foreman-printer for A.S. Lyon's new venture, the *Moreton Bay Courier*. Within a month he published the first issues - at first a weekly, later three times a week. Early in 1848, Lyon was in financial trouble and Swan bought him out, and employed William Wilkes as editor until 1856.

There was no Baptist fellowship or meeting of any kind when the Swans arrived, but when the United Evangelical Church was formed by Rev. Charles Stewart in 1849, the Swans were active members. After Mr Stewart's retirement, there were meetings resulting in the formation of the first Baptist Church in 1855. Mr and Mrs Swan were foundation members. In 1858, the Wharf Street building was completed in time to welcome the Rev. B.G. Wilson as the church's second minister. He arrived in Brisbane on Sept 11, 1858 at 2:30am, but was welcomed and given hospitality by Mr and Mrs Swan before conducting his first service at 11am the same day. There were no surviving children of the marriage (The passenger list of the S.S. *Tamar* whence they arrived in Brisbane from Sydney lists Mr James Swan, wife and daughter. This daughter must have been born during their stay in Sydney and have died shortly after their arrival in Brisbane as no further mention of her can be found). Their house, first in town, then at Burnside, was a regular rendezvous for all Baptist friends visiting Brisbane. Mrs Swan is described as an active worker in the church, cheerful and sympathetic, her deeds of kindness done with little ostentation.

In many ways the views reflected in the *Moreton Bay Courier* were influenced by Swan's time with the redoubtable Dr Lang, but they also represented the prevailing views among the Lang ship settlers and the evangelical group comprising Baptists, Congregationalists and Free Church Presbyterians who were opposed to State Aid, the dominant Anglicanism and the pastoralists. From the beginning of the paper,

Swan threw himself into the anti-transportation cause, opposing the squatters' desire for cheap labour. He also supported the movement to separate Queensland from New South Wales. "Swan", writes J.J. Knight, "by his brightness of intellect, his integrity, his canny shrewdness in business and keen interest in public affairs speedily took and was conceded a prominent place in the growing town." In 1856 he leased the paper to W.C. Bellbridge and Charles Lilley to make a visit to Scotland. He resumed management in 1858, but in 1859 with Queensland now separated, he sold the paper to fellow Baptist T.B. Stephens, and retired from newspaper work to take a more active civic role. He worked towards the proclamation of Brisbane, became an alderman and was the second mayor of Brisbane, elected for three successive terms 1873-75 when the first bridge was built over the Brisbane River. On April 18, 1878 he was appointed to the Legislative Council (Upper House). The Hon. James Swan was a MLC till his death.

His wife died on January 27, 1888, then somewhat surprisingly for those times, he, at the age of 78 on January 10, 1889 married Christina Street, aged 31. The couple sailed for Scotland in 1891 but he died in the Red Sea on May 26 and was buried near Port Said, Egypt.

This brings us to the matter of his will. His interest and gifts to benevolent and church extension causes were well known. He was made a Life Member of the Baptist Association of Queensland, and because of these interests, it was anticipated that as well as the City Tabernacle, there would be a good sum for the Association. In the early 90's after flooding, bank crashes and an economic recession, the Association had no funds to start churches in country areas. A number of preachers applied for funds for the first year of a new ministry (the standard practice) but were declined. Though not stated the inference was that when the Swan legacy was received money could be available. They were doomed to disappointment and as a result no new churches were started in country areas for the remainder of the decade.

Strangely with all of James Swan's business acumen, he and his solicitor failed to comply with the legal conditions in the preparation of the will. He had two witnesses instead of the required three in wills of this type and the will was not registered. After provision for his wife and 500 pounds for the City Tabernacle, the residue, estimated to be between 45,000 and 50,000 pounds, was to go the Association. What a difference that money would have made! He was regarded as having died intestate with half of his fortune going to provision for his wife and because there were no children or next-of-kin, half to the State. After the death of his wife in 1930, a small sum of something less than 11,000 pounds after fees came to the Baptist Union, the interest from which is still used in the work of evangelism and church extension.

In the words of the tribute written by the Rev. B. Hewison, his life was "the remarkable story of the Scottish laddie who broke through the disabilities of evil environment, made good in the best sense in the land of his adoption and (became) an influence in the highest of all interests."

For some years the Swann Estate legacy appeared as a separate item in Baptist Union accounts. Swann with two n's appears in the 1930 references, and also in Swann Road, Taringa which is named after him.

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The Baptist Historical Society of Queensland An Outline History after 10 Years

by Rev. Dr. David Parker, M.A., B.D., Ph.D., L.Th., Dip.R.E., Dip.L.S.

The Baptist Historical Society of Queensland (BHSQ) was established as a voluntary society operating within the Baptist denomination in Queensland at a meeting at Windsor Road Baptist Church on May 1st, 1984. Rev. Owen Gregory was the first secretary. Late in 1985, Mrs Ellen Chataway took over, who with her husband Rev. Vince Chataway as treasurer, has held the position ever since. The founder and chairman is Rev. Dr David Parker.

The BHSQ had a pre-history dating back to 1961 when the Baptist Union appointed a committee, also known as "The Baptist Historical Society." Principal T.C. Warriner was the first convenor, but in 1963 Rev. John E. White assumed the position, which he held until 1979. Mr Bob Bavinton held it for the remainder of the time. Others who were long-time members of this committee were Revs. F.J.C. Stone, A.M. Hooker, H.E. West and Mr. R.J. Morris; Rev. S.W. Nickerson served on it 1968-1972.

Although this committee had a twenty year life-time, it was not very active, to say the least. It took two years before it was listed in the Baptist Year Book, and then another five years before it brought a report. Even then the reports said it had not met in the previous year, or had met only once, or planning was underway. There are some letters in the files from the General Secretary "encouraging" the committee to be more active, but evidently they were not very successful.

The committee's main interest was the centenary of the Baptist Union in 1977, but the work for that was done by a separate centenary committee appointed by the Union. On the literary side, Rev. J.E. White was commissioned to write the official history of the Baptist Union which was published in 1977 as *A Fellowship of Service*. But the committee had little to do with that because once work got underway, it was the author's personal responsibility. By the time the book was published the committee had stopped meeting.

There was an even earlier historical interest at a national level. In 1950, the Baptist Union of Australia established the Australian Baptist Historical Society with its own official crest. (see page 3) It cost 5 shillings to join and a gift of 10 guineas brought life membership. The Society put out a magazine called *Churinga* (aboriginal for tradition) for a few years, but then both Society and magazine ceased to exist.

But there was always a need for a body to foster historical interest, research, publication and preservation of materials throughout the denomination. This had been happening effectively elsewhere in Australia, especially in New South Wales where a historical society with a voluntary membership had developed an effective and enviable record of service since 1974. So at the 1983 Assembly, following prior discussion, Dr David Parker, who had research interests covering Queensland Baptist history, proposed the formation of a society in Queensland on lines similar to those followed in NSW. (A document now come to hand from the old committee, dated 1969, actually proposed a very similar function for the old committee, but it was not acted upon at that time.) He was appointed convenor of the existing historical committee and it was given the brief to investigate the proposal.

The committee endorsed the idea of forming a voluntary society, and steps were taken for its formation on May 1, 1984 with the blessing of the Baptist Union. None of the existing committee members continued their involvement, except for Rev. John White who acted as an unofficial patron until his death in 1993.

The major activities of the BHSQ since then have been the publication of the journal, now up to 28 issues, an annual public presentation, advice and assistance to researchers and support for the Baptist Archives. The greatest successes have been the celebration of the German Baptist work in 1986, the William Carey Bi-Centenary lecture by Dr Ken Manley in 1992 and the publication of the information book, *Baptists in Queensland* in 1994, which went into a second printing within a few weeks.

Other presentations have focused on Spurgeon and Whale, Clifford House, Baptist Church architecture, City Tabernacle and its listing by the National Trust, Windsor Road Church, T.C. Warriner and E.S. Jones, to name a few. An important function was held in 1991 when member Joan Maxwell's first volume on Baptist camping was launched. A number of guides on historical work have also been published and the Society acts as an important support group for the Baptist Union Archives. (Since 1982, Dr. Parker has been the honorary Archivist, a position which became a Union appointment in 1988.)

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Baptist Life and Faith in the Recent Past

by Rev. Norman E. Weston, Dip.R.E.

There are five significant factors that have marked our Baptist Church life in the recent past - some which may be regarded with a measure of concern and others as challenges. But before listing these, there are three influences that have been strongly felt in our churches during this period. They are the process of change that we have all had to contend in almost every area of life; church life in the United States to which we all seem to look for ideas and motivation; and the growth of the charismatic movement, to which some have reacted and others have responded.

There is one other matter to mention. While my subject includes both life and faith, little needs to be said about the latter, because it has remained steady. Whatever new emphases there have been, such as spiritual gifts or the relation of church and state in the matter of accepting government grants, changes in faith have been marginal. But the same cannot be said for the expression of our life and ministry.

1. The spirit of variety.

When I entered the ministry forty years ago, no matter which church one attended throughout Queensland, there was a similar pattern of worship. The service started at 11am with the doxology; the old green hymn book was used and four hymns were normally sung, or five if it was communion. Wherever you went to preach, you never had to worry about preparing an order of service - it was always the same and you knew it off by heart. So did the organist. All she ever needed were the hymn numbers. But today all that has changed. Some churches worship in a charismatic style, others are more traditional while others keep in touch with the past yet enjoy a contemporary spirit. Even the times of services are varied - it pays to check the time if you are visitor. Also the songs sung in one church may be quite different from those in another. That can make it very difficult for visitors to enter into the spirit of worship.

Variety is also seen in church structures. Some follow the simple structure of pastor and deacons, but others have added elders. Then there is the portfolio style where each leader has responsibility for a particular area of ministry. Other use the representative form where leaders elected at the beginning of the year are entrusted with running church affairs for the rest of the year without any more members' meeting.

This variety allows each church to meet the peculiar needs and mood of its own community under the leading of the Spirit. It also allows worshippers to find the style of worship and church life to which they feel most responsive.

2. Popular acceptance of team ministries.

Team ministry is expressed in two ways. The first form is found at congregational level, sometimes called Body Life, where the various acts of worship are conducted by members of the congregation. The only time you see the pastor is when he rises to preach. This style depends strongly on the giftedness of people and on the training and preparation given to them. Without that the service of worship can be left weak and terribly uninspiring.

The other form of Team Ministry is expressed at the pastoral level. Once even the largest churches were led by solo pastors, supported by good and faithful lay people. But today, even relatively small churches are struggling to support multiple pastors.

There are four reasons for the popularity of team ministries. (i) Because of the complex world in which we live, it is difficult for a pastor to meet the demands on his ministry. (ii) There are growing congregations and it is felt that one full-time person can rarely pastor more than 150-180 people effectively. (iii) It is trendy and some churches are thoughtlessly caught up in the trend. (iv) Some pastors lack broad leadership ability or lack the willingness to stretch themselves. Thus they are always looking for someone else to come in alongside them and take over areas of ministry in which they feel inadequate. Also, they possibly lack the ability to lead and train their own lay people to take over these ministries.

3. Consumerism.

Consumerism is the attitude of shopping around for the best deal. It happens in the world at large and now it happens in the church. No longer do we necessarily support the nearest church but the one that

serves us best, where we feel most comfortable and which offers our family the best ministry programme. The fact that we are a mobile community, all driving cars, enables us to travel reasonable distances to enjoy the church of our choice.

But consumerism has possibly eroded an old time virtue called denominational loyalty. No longer is it "once a Baptist, always a Baptist." If someone is not happy in their church, they shop around for another and their searching can quite easily include another denomination.

Consumerism puts a lot of pressure upon our churches to perform. If they do not present good ministry programmes or a sense of excellence and quality in their worship, if they are not working at meeting peoples' needs, then people are likely to go where they can find this.

4. Broadening of Christian Standards.

Standards that once used to be sharp and distinctive amongst our people have now been broadened. Take for instance our observance of the Lord's Day. No longer does it have a sense of sanctity. In fact, it almost seems to be more a day of self-indulgence than a day holy to the Lord. Or take the question of social drinking which would once have excluded people from church membership. Today it is rarely frowned upon, and may be more widely practiced among church people than we think. Our old stand for abstinence seems to have lapsed.

Take again the area of family breakdown, including divorce, unfaithfulness and child abuse. You cannot help but notice that not only is all this happening out there in the community, but it is also happening within the Church.

Take our viewing habits - television and the big screen. When it comes to violence, sex and bad language, our moral tolerance, or should I say, our immoral tolerance, is far more elastic than it ever used to be.

This broadening of standards must effect the distinctive witness of the church, and suggests that there may need to be a stronger emphasis upon the biblical message of holiness today.

5. Openness to social and community ministries.

When I first entered the ministry I can recall how hesitant we were about becoming involved in social work and social issues. We were afraid of what was known in those days as the "social gospel" - a gospel that seemed to be espoused by the liberal churches. It was a gospel that seemed to suggest that a more Christian society would develop if our social structures were changed. In other words, root out racism, increase brotherhood, lift the standard of education, smash oppressive social structures, and you will built a better Christian society. Evangelicals could not accept that. They believed that the only way society could change was for people to change in their basic nature. The only way that could happen was to undergo the spiritual experience of conversion.

But today we have a much more balanced approach. We recognise that social issues and community welfare are a natural flow-on from Christian love and compassion. Wherever people are hurting, we must be there with the touch and voice of Christ. We also see them as bridging ministries that enable us to cross over into people's lives with our most precious ministry, the gospel of Christ.

So you can look at any church directory today, and note that the programme not only outlines church services, prayer meetings and youth groups; it also advertises play-groups, craft clubs, counselling services, English classes for ethnic people, neighbourhood groups, drop-in centres, hamper ministries and so on. It is a declaration that we are a church with a clear community orientation.

The warning here is, of course, that we never lose the right balance; that we never allow our community and social interests to blur the clear message of the gospel. We must always remembers that there are scores of organisations along with the government welfare departments doing social and community work today. But only one group of people is charged with the preaching and sharing of the gospel, and that is the church. If we do not do that work, no one will!

Let me conclude by saying that there are other trends we could have noted. For instance, there is our contemporary approach to evangelism, which has struggled to free itself from the old crusade-centred approach with its hard hell-fire preaching. Evangelism today is more church-centred, softer in its approach and far more positive.

The way we were - a century ago

by Dr Leslie J. Ball, B.A.(Hons), Dip.Ed., B.Ed., B.D., Ph.D.

Introduction.

This paper is intended to be not so much a chronological history as a cameo of Queensland Baptist life in the nineteenth century, with a special focus on issues and practices which are still important today, or which have influenced our contemporary Queensland Baptist lifestyle. What did it mean to be a Baptist in nineteenth century Queensland? How did one become a member of a church? What did the church see as its basic function? How did it conduct its worship? These are the sorts of questions which present themselves, the answers to which are sometimes amusing, sometimes embarrassing, sometimes challenging, but always significant to an appreciation of the way we are today.

I. Membership of the Church

Entry into Queensland Baptist churches has always been associated with believers' baptism. The basic Baptist doctrine of individual faith as a pre-requisite for salvation, and for church membership, has traditionally been demonstrated by immersion, or baptism, before the gathered church. Minimal doctrinal test was involved. The first separate Baptist church was formed at Wharf Street on 5 August 1855. The membership held widely variant theological views and, typical of pioneering Baptist works, the church was formed on open membership lines, but with a clause requiring officers to be "immersed believers." The constitution was altered in 1857 to the more typical Queensland Baptist position: "That Baptists only be admitted to membership, but that Paedo-Baptists be admitted to the Lord's Table." The early statement embracing "Calvinistic doctrines" was also soon amended to the following: *That, without giving any opinion on doctrinal subjects, this church resolves that ... the words "holding Calvinistic doctrine" be omitted, and that the name stand as "Baptist church."*

Thus, Paedo-baptists were eliminated from membership, thus tightening up the Baptist strictness, yet Calvinistic doctrines were also eliminated as a confessional requirement, thus, ironically, relaxing that same strictness. By the time of B.G. Wilson, believers' baptism was the sole doctrinal distinctive of the Baptist church at Wharf Street, with no clear confessional statement being required as to controversial areas of belief. This recognizable badge of Baptists - believers' baptism - was to be the predominant act of demarcation of members throughout the rest of the century. The advent of the Baptist Association of Queensland in 1877 coincided with a reduction in inter-church differences, and the various Baptist churches in Queensland tended to come closer to one another in both doctrine and polity. For membership, baptism was universally the pre-requisite in Queensland Baptist churches throughout the 1870-1880's.

The first development in this area appeared in the 1890's, when some churches began to become less exclusive in their attitude to a baptized membership. The first sign came at City Tabernacle (the former Wharf Street Church), when it revised its rules in 1890. The first rule proposed, under the heading "Membership," read as follows: *The membership of the church shall consist only of such persons as have professed faith in Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and who have been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

The proposal was in essence adopted, but suggested amendments show an interesting development. The first, supported by George Buzacott (for years the Secretary of the Baptist Association), was: *That the word "only" in line 1 be omitted, and that the following sentence be added to the rule - "Baptism, however, will not be required in cases of husbands or wives of church members who have been brought up in other churches and express their inability to conscientiously conform to the ordinance."*

Pastor William Whale moved further: *That the following words be added to the rule - "The only exception to be made to be on production of satisfactory medical certificate."*

Though both amendments were lost, they were indicative of a move towards a relaxation of the strict requirement of baptism, a move with supporters as influential as Buzacott and Whale in the 1890's.

This movement was not limited to City Tabernacle. At Dinmore, a separate Union Church was formed in 1895 so named because it admitted and performed both infants' and believers' baptism. After establishing its name as "the Dinmore Baptist Union Church of open fellowship" (Rule 1), the next rule was, "That Christians of all Evangelical denominations shall be eligible for membership" (Rule 2). Other than in the church name, "baptize" or any of its cognates appeared nowhere in the document. The sole condition of membership was "that (applicants) are true disciples of the Lord Jesus" (Rule 3). So, for the first time in

Queensland, a Baptist church was formed which not only allowed for non-baptized members, but made no reference to baptism at all in its constitution.

Of greater importance than Dinmore in the open membership issue was Taringa. Begun in 1889, Taringa church was a Baptist Mission station of Wharf Street/City Tabernacle until its independence in 1897. The new church drafted its own constitution under the name, "Taringa Union Baptist Church." The first rule, regarding membership, read thus: *Only such persons shall be eligible for membership, who satisfy the Church that they are sincerely endeavouring to do the will of God by following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Again, there was no reference to baptism anywhere in the document. Unlike Dinmore, however, there was a strong reaction to Taringa's open membership, especially by the Baptist Association of Queensland. Legal opinion was received that the admission of unbaptized persons to an Association church was a breach of the Constitution. The President asked Taringa to revise its constitution, but it declined, responding as follows: *That while we as a church cannot see our way to abandon the principle of Open-membership; we agree to send as delegates to the Assembly only such as are baptized believers.*

This compromise was taken to the Association, where it was reported that the obstacles regarding Taringa had been thereby removed, so no further action was taken. The situation did necessitate a re-thinking of the Association's Constitution, with a new statement incorporated in 1899 to accommodate open-membership churches: *as not to exclude churches which have admitted or may admit unbaptized persons as members provided always that in such churches the immersion of believers is the only recognized Christian baptism, and that the representation of such churches in this Association be restricted to members so baptized.*

As the nineteenth century drew to its close, the issue of baptism as a condition of membership of a Baptist church had, rather ironically, been officially laid a little to one side. By virtue of the pronouncement of the Association, baptism was no longer mandatory. Most churches maintained baptism as the primary condition of membership, but the toleration of open membership within the Association was indeed a far cry from the restrictive statements of the 1860's.

II. Function of the Church

The first consideration of the young colonial church was to provide Christian fellowship for believers in a new land. The spiritual was always to the fore in this area of fellowship, with a strong sense of community engendered by the minority mentality of a small dislocated group. Smaller churches were assisted financially and with preaching personnel by the larger works, especially Wharf Street. Members were strongly encouraged to avail themselves of all the "privileges" of such fellowship, even if some discipline (in the form of visitation and admonition) were required. A distinct change occurred in the ethos of this fellowship after the formation of the Baptist Association in 1877. The previously strong local initiative then became a matter for the Association, with virtually all churches quickly adopting the view that the provision of spiritual needs in the colony was indeed an Association matter. From 1879 on, there was a dramatic cessation of local individual church involvement in the planting of new works. This turning to the Association for denominational growth lessened the intensity of grass roots involvement, a feature which was to become a marked motif in all later developments.

However, a different trend existed in the area of what may be called supportive fellowship. Poverty was a perennial problem. While some churches had some very wealthy members, most memberships consisted of working class people: shop-keepers, mechanics, artisans and labourers. Key leaders were forever being asked to donate or lend money. The liberality of wealthy citizens such as James Swan, Richard Gailey, T.B. Stephens, R.A. Kingsford, and Edmund Gregory, is well documented in the records of several churches. Pastors regularly had to forgo stipends to assist the churches' funds, with some, such as Wilson, Kingsford and Moore, being substantial contributors of land and money to the cause of a number of churches. An interesting incident of supportive fellowship occurred in Maryborough in 1885, when a members' meeting was called after church to deal with some urgent business. The resolution of the meeting was as follows:

That this church desire to express to Brother Ferguson their sincere sympathy with him in the recent persecution to which he has been subjected in the Police Court's Case of Cook versus Ferguson, and in order to give practical effect to the same subscribes herewith the amount of costs in connection with it, their conviction being that in acting as he did, he simply did his duty. In conveying the above resolution Brother Warry handed him a cheque for £11/15/6, subscribed by the members of the church.

A report in the local newspaper of the previous day (29 Nov., 1885) gave full details of the case,

involving an assault charge laid against the revered deacon Ferguson. Ferguson had been convicted of assaulting a man attempting to ride his horse into a Salvation Army procession near a hotel. He had caught hold of the bridle, backed the horse away from the procession which included Ferguson's daughter, and because of his aggression in so doing (against police orders), he was convicted and fined a total of 14/6. The indignation and support of the church were clearly and practically expressed in that Ferguson came out of it all with a nett profit of £1/1/-!

Early colonial Queensland Baptists were led in the main by people of predominantly missionary mentality. Early evangelistic effort was based, like all other functions of the church, on the local church unit. Of Wharf Street, it has been said that, in the early days, "in a real sense, the pastorate consisted of the whole of Queensland." (1) In the 1860's, Wilson and others from Wharf Street regularly conducted preaching stations at Oxley, Boggo, Moggill, Hendra, Enoggera and Sandgate, and Wilson also made visits to Maryborough, Caboolture, Rockhampton and Bowen to hold services. In the early stages of the 1850-60's, such outreach was totally the responsibility of local churches. Very soon after 1877, the oversight of preaching stations, the provision of pastors, the outreach into new areas such as Townsville and Gympie, all became the responsibility of the Association. Individual churches became increasingly dependent on the services of the Association, so much so that by the 1890's, virtually no such work was instigated by any local church. Even Wharf Street saw its preaching stations decline after Wilson's death in 1878, and the following period in its history has rightly been described as "very much a period of local consolidation." (2) No new work actually commenced in the 1890's.

An area notable by its absence is that of foreign missions. Though there would be some passing interest in a talk by some missionary, there was generally no direct involvement in missions, and indeed very little interest generated at all from within the early colonial church. The area of foreign missions was never a part of the earlier church, nor did it really achieve much before the twentieth century, the exceptional efforts of Martha Plested and Kate Allanby notwithstanding. What little development there was came, once again, through the official formation of a Society within the Association in 1887. No local initiative was involved.

No church can exist in isolation from the community of which it forms a part. Before Brisbane was a town, Baptists were involved in its politics. In January 1859, a petition was presented to the Governor of New South Wales, "praying that Brisbane be declared a municipality." Of the 181 progressive residents who signed this petition, at least nine are identifiable as members of Wharf Street Baptist Church, and at least six names are identical with other church members' names. Grimes, Warry, Kingsford, Swan, and Stephens are included, and recur frequently in colonial affairs. After Brisbane became a municipality in 1859, Baptists occupied the mayoral office for six of the 18 years up to 1876, with James Swan sharing the honour with Petrie as the only two men to be elected to three consecutive terms of office in this period. There were also at least six Baptist aldermen in those early councils. The first Baptist to sit in the Queensland Parliament was T.S. Warry, member for East Moreton 1860-63. He was soon followed by the more illustrious T.B. Stephens, representing South Brisbane, who graduated from the Brisbane council to Parliament in 1863, where he remained till his death in 1877. In that time, he held the positions of Colonial Treasurer, Colonial Secretary, Postmaster-General, and Secretary for Public Lands. His son, William Stephens, was to carry on the family tradition into the twentieth century. (3)

The press was probably the area where early Baptists exercised most popular influence. Several key newspapers were owned or edited by Baptists. James Swan came to Moreton Bay in 1846, and established the settlement's first, and for several decades the most influential, newspaper, *The Moreton Bay Courier*, which for 15 years was printed, edited and published by its owner. By this medium, Swan was to have considerable influence on public opinion. For example, in the transportation of convicts issue, Swan's editorial articles strongly opposed the move, and he urged all readers to voice their opinions. "The whole blame of any evil consequence that may flow must be attributed to the disgraceful apathy of such of the inhabitants as had no interests to serve by means of these men." (23 June, 1849) Though Swan pursued an editorial policy of giving equal space to both sides of issues, his own editorial comment gave ample expression to his Baptist principles of social ethics. This attitude remained when the paper was bought by T.B. Stephens, but it then passed out of Baptist hands, and the tenor changed. Swan was undoubtedly the most influential Baptist editor, but others such as Edmund Gregory, editor of Ipswich's *Queensland Times* up to 1860, and William Buzacott, who commenced Rockhampton's *The Morning Bulletin* in 1861, also played a significant part in early colonial opinion. When these newspapers passed from Baptist control, the denomination lost a useful medium for the dissemination of social values it considered important.

The church's involvement in social issues followed a similar development to that in the area of outreach. In the 1850-60's, a significant number of individual Baptists, such as Wilson, Stephens, and Swan were heavily involved, but though their values were influenced by their Christianity, their

involvement was always on an individual level, never as a mouthpiece of their church. In 1885, a radical change occurred, when the Association promulgated its first social document as a denomination. This took the form of a petition sent to the Legislative Assembly by the Association in favour of the Licensing Bill then under consideration. (Minutes, Baptist Association 1 Sept., 1885) This first piece of social action embraced a theme that was to dominate future Association declarations, namely, the issue of alcohol in society. The other main focus was gambling. In 1888, Whale proposed a motion deploring the increase of gambling facilities, and urging legislation and administrative action to discourage such proceedings. (Minutes 13 Dec., 1888) The final expression of the Association's sense of denominational identity in this field can be seen in 1898 when, after 20 years of existence and 10 years of involvement in social comment, it formally established its own Committee of Public Questions. With this committee, the Association now had an officially structured voice in matters of social concern.

III. Worship in the Church

The principal characteristics of worship were the emphasis on biblicity in content and decency and orderliness in style. At Jireh in 1867, Kingsford wanted to make the Sunday services "a little more adoring," and the following order was adopted, which effectively reflects the order of most churches in the period: prayer, singing, Bible reading with exposition, singing, prayer, singing, benediction. The most important elements in the structured services of the church were biblical exposition and preaching, congregational singing of hymns, prayer, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Preaching has always been a major focus of Baptists. B.G. Wilson's sermons (MSS in John Oxley Library) give an insight into the man and the preaching of the 1860's. They are based on one or two scripture verses, followed by a rather lengthy discourse, not always showing the tight and logical structure that modern homiletics might require. They were characterized by rather plain language, replete with somewhat platitudinous biblical sayings, the typical jargon of nineteenth century evangelicalism. The high priority put on biblicity in all things tended to produce sermons that were not much more than a collection of biblical sayings, not always with an obvious connection. Here is a typical tirade against indulging in sins:

What depth of wickedness and depravity is there in the human heart, when knowledge and guilt of the consequences that are to follow will not deter men from the foulest of crimes, A devilish desire to do evil so foul that it only requires the opportunity to be afforded them to do the evil, and then evils will be perpetrated too horrible for their own consciences to bear under the gaze of public opinion. (5 Mar., 1865)

The generalities of this foulness are never made specific. Simplistic, undramatic, often meandering - such was the preaching style of B.G. Wilson. Yet this very style, coupled with his missionary zeal and obvious strength of character, made his one of the most respected names in Queensland Baptist history.

William Whale was of all the preachers the man who seemed most alert to the realities of his environment, and his sermons were typically anchored in that reality:

This is a grossly materialistic age, and many minds are imbued with the idea that nature is the only God. It is also a critical and sceptical age, in which our gospels have been considered fables or forgeries, and the facts but myths on which religious people feed their depraved appetites. (Qld. Freeman 16 Aug., 1888)

From this beginning he proceeded to a clear apologetic for the Christian faith, showing his experience of life, and leading to decisive personal application. So, from the religious platitudes of the 1860's, the style of preaching had developed an articulate realism by the end of the century.

The hymnody of a church can be considered as a reflection of that church's theology. From early days, the most popular hymnal was *Psalms and Hymns*, edited by Dr Watts, published by the Trustees of the Baptist Hymnal. Later, Sankey's *Sacred Songs and Solos* became a very popular adjunct to the Hymnal, but it was virtually never used exclusively. Several churches used Sankey's only at the evening services or at outstations. Some were hostile to its "modernity," and rejected it outright. In the 1880-90's, the issue of using Sankey's book was quite a widespread concern.

In *Psalms and Hymns*, the most common authors are the eighteenth century English evangelical Isaac Watts and, to a lesser degree, Charles Wesley. Others who feature are Frances Ridley Havergal, Philip Doddridge and William Cowper. *Sacred Songs and Solos*, as well as the English evangelicalism of Wesley, Toplady and Horatio Bonar, contains much more of the American revivalism, as produced notably by Fanny Crosby, George Stebbins and, of course, Ira Sankey himself. If it is possible to identify one song as the most popular, records indicate that it was Edward Perronet's "All hail the power of Jesu's name." It recurred constantly at public functions, church services, annual meetings, and church

openings. At Sunday Schools' functions, "Yield not to Temptation" was a hardy annual, with its very typical ethical appeal. Other popular songs in many of the churches include William Cowper's graphic "There is a fountain filled with blood," Frances Havergal's hymn of consecration, "Take my life and let it be," and Augustus Toplady's classic, "Rock of ages." Again, these individual songs emphasise the elements of eschewing sin, adoring the Saviour, a sense of mission, and the importance of personal consecration and pietism.

Music was a key element of worship, though it was not universally approved. In the early days, it was usual to have the hymns read out. Soon, choral and congregational singing was introduced in all churches. Yet even as late as 15 July, 1882, *The Queensland Freeman* ran an article from London, in which the use of music in worship was condemned:

Personally, I have no faith in solo singing, or trumpet blowing, or choir performance, or musical devices of any kind. Such were not the acts of the Apostles recorded in Scripture When I read anything in the Bible about singing the Gospel then I will believe in it. I have never heard of any commission given by Christ to His disciples to sing the Gospel.

However, vocal music soon became well accepted in Moreton Bay. Yet it was not so for instrumental music. The simple harmonium was common enough, but the organ, acceptable for Sunday School and Christian Endeavour, had a slow acceptance into the worship service of the church. This was typical of the tendency towards iconoclasm exhibited by many Baptists, which saw the use of instruments in worship as unspiritual, therefore virtually sacrilegious.

The organ became generally accepted by the 1890's, but no such development occurred with other instruments. Maryborough, a city of brass bands, rejected the proposal to introduce such a band into the church, even as late as the 1890's. A layman suggested an evangelistic effort incorporating good music, a good choir, and instrumental music. The deacons warmed to the idea, resolving to form an orchestra of five instruments, namely, cornet, tenor horn, flute, clarinet, and violin. However, the members were not so enthusiastic, and the motion was ultimately lost. There was also objection to the use of a brass instrument in the Sunday evening service. The pastor gave an explanation, but quickly added that "if objected to (it) would be discontinued." It was discontinued. (Minutes 13 Feb., 8, 25 March 1891; 21 Nov. 1893) Even in this city of brass bands, no instrument other than the organ was considered sacred enough for use in worship services. It is not surprising then, that other churches were even less likely to use such dubious instruments.

Decency and orderliness in worship were absolute essentials, and anything perceived as detrimental to such orderliness was urgently checked. There are many references to actions taken to deal with disorderly conduct. In Wharf Street in 1872, (Minutes 29 Feb., 14 May 1872) two young members were reprimanded for having interrupted a baptismal service "by starting a hymn in lieu of the one which had been selected," and the pastor issued a "friendly caution not to repeat such an impropriety." At Jireh, when the Polynesian friends' behaviour in church was deemed objectionable, they were allocated seats near to that occupied by Mrs Kingsford (the pastor's wife). Similarly, the Sunday School children were given the seats at the platform end of the chapel, girls on the right and boys on the left. (Minutes 5 Dec., 1870; 29 April, 1878) At Petrie Terrace, the conduct of the young people during services led to their being directed to sit at the end of the church during the service for a few Sundays. (Minutes 2 Feb., 1883) Among the Germans, men traditionally sat on one side of the church, with women and children on the other. However, they too arranged seating to bring young people into line. When, in the evenings, "mischief (was) gotten up to in the rear pews," the young people were directed to occupy the front pews. (Protocollbuch 6 Aug., 1892) It seems that the activity of youth and the need for decent order were not always in harmony, even in the nineteenth century.

There was, above all, a pervasive dread of "innovation." In December 1874, Wharf Street received a letter from a discontented member objecting to the singing of the "Amen" at the end of some hymns. It had produced, he said, "such an unpleasant effect upon his mind that it had caused him to stay away." In 1890, Kingsford introduced the idea of a responsive reading of a Psalm into the worship service at Jireh. The practice was soon discontinued because of considerable dissatisfaction with what was considered "an innovation." The attitude to innovation was expressed succinctly, and typically, in a letter from the ageing C.H. Spurgeon to his graduate at Toowoomba, William Higglett, in 1880: *I rejoice in your faithfulness. Error seems in the air, and a sort of idiotic craving for silly amusements.* (29 Sept., 1888) Such amusements found very little sympathy among nineteenth century Queensland Baptists.

Conclusion

To be a Baptist in nineteenth century Queensland was to belong to a small but increasingly

self-confident and articulate community. The individual enterprise of the 1850's developed into a denominationally structured organization by 1900, a development which was essential if the Baptist cause were to survive and grow beyond its first generation. The main challenge for the nineteenth century Baptist church was to maintain its spiritual integrity and its evangelistic fervour, a task which seemed to become more formidable as the denominational identity emerged. The trend was for the local churches to become more dependent on "the Association" to lead the way, with a consequent diminution of individual zeal. The larger and more self-confident a denomination becomes, the more difficult it is to maintain the intensity of individual involvement. That was the challenge of the nineteenth century. Is it any different 100 years later?

References:

1. R.D. Smith, *The Evangelical Outreach of the City Tabernacle Baptist Church*. (Brisbane: Baptist Theological College of Queensland, 1972) pp. 3, 13
2. R.D. Smith, *The Evangelical Outreach of the City Tabernacle Baptist Church*, pp. 26f
3. The other Baptist mayors in the period were T.B. Stephens (who succeeded Petrie), R.S. Warry, and Richard Ash Kingsford. F.J. Brewer and R. Dunn, *Sixty-six Years of Municipal Government* (Brisbane: Standard Press, 1925) p. 55; Queensland Parliamentary Handbook, May 1991, p. 346
4. P.G. Bryant, *A History of the German Baptist Churches of Queensland* (Brisbane: Baptist Theological College of Queensland, 1982) p. 61

Weston (cont. from page 6)

I could also have mentioned the home group movement which has become part of our churches today, or our Baptist church architecture which is moving from the cathedral-type building to a more community-style building.

So much we could have looked at, but it is a reminder that the past ten to twenty years have been years of great challenge and excitement, and years of change and renewal. It is to be hoped that the change and renewal that have taken place will provide a good springboard for a strong and progressive future in Christ.

BHSQ History (cont. from page 4)

There have also been some failures and disappointments. A meeting on Martha Plested, Queensland's first Baptist missionary, in 1985 was one, while support from the denomination for the re-opening of the Archives in 1993 was another. Membership is still small, although very solid, but wider recognition through strong denominational and church support leaves much to be desired. The scope of the Society's activities is limited because of the small number of people involved; furthermore, funding is entirely dependent on members fees as the Society is not part of the denominational budget.

Organizing the Baptist Union Archives has been another major area of activity. In 1982, Dr Parker began sorting and indexing the material held in the basement of the Union offices at 225 Brunswick St. Over the years it received modest use by students, church and family history researchers and Union personnel, but conditions were impossible for any serious work. The material was left in storage for about a year after the Union re-located to 518 Brunswick St., but in May 1993, extensive space on the top floor was allocated for the Archives. Subsequently, the material has been comprehensively sorted and re-boxed; the index has been extended and computerised. The Archives were re-opened on Sept 11, but shelving is still needed for the boxes of material and better work and display areas need to be set up. More work is also needed on listing and indexing, acquisition of material and general services.

So at this 10th anniversary point, much is left for the future. History is big business in these days of transition and change, and there is a consequent growth in interest in the past. So there is never going to be a shortage of work for the BHSQ. Accordingly, the Society hopes to develop its publication program in the future and expand into the area of family history. The services and resources offered by the society, particularly assistance to researchers and local church, and the improvement of indices and listings of denominational information, can also be developed. The scope for this development is limited only by the financial, personal and denominational backing received by the Society.