

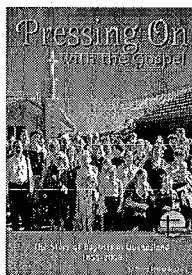
The Queensland Baptist Forum

The Journal of the Baptist Heritage Queensland

(formerly: Baptist Historical Society of Qld Newsletter)

No. 61 Dec 2005

Baptist Celebrations



2005 has been a year of celebrations, and there is more to come! It started last year with the centenary of the Queensland Baptist College. This year it continued with the 21st birthday of our Historical Society, and the sesqui-centenary of the City Tabernacle Baptist Church. This important event commenced in March with their 150 days of celebration, and came to a climax on 5th August when the church conducted a Communion service on the exact day of the formation of the Brisbane Baptist Church. Celebrations continued over the weekend with Dr Derek Tidball as guest speaker, and the Governor as a guest on the Sunday morning service.

Then it was time for all Queensland Baptists to celebrate the establishment of Baptist life in the state. Dr David Coffey, the newly installed President of the Baptist World Alliance was the guest speaker for the 2005 Convention held on the first weekend in September. The launching of our new history book took place on Sept 2 at the business day (see page 5) carried out most appropriately by Mrs Gwyn Milne, President of the Baptist Union of Australia. Just prior to this, General Superintendent Dr David Loder gave his 'State of the Union' address which focused also on the 150th anniversary and continuing progress for the future. Features in *QB Magazine* throughout the year helped to draw attention to the 150th anniversary. The August issue in particular carried a centre-spread with an overview of the history. Similar material is printed in this issue on pages 3-4. We are indebted to *QB Magazine* for the photographs of the launching on page 5, and for a brief report on its October issue.

In the meantime, in July about 30 Queenslanders had joined with about 13,000 Baptists from around the world in Birmingham, UK to celebrate the Centenary of the Baptist World Alliance (about the same number who attended the Jubilee Congress in London, 1955—but overall the Australian contingent was well down this year!). This was a magnificent event which was an extremely fitting celebration of the Centenary, and served as a great milestone for future progress.

But the celebrations are not over yet—the next major one coming up is the Ter-Centenary of the formation of the first Baptist Church—watch for more details of this celebration in 2009!

<p>Baptist Heritage Queensland <i>The Baptist Historical Society of Queensland</i> (est. 1984)</p> <p>Membership (2006) Individual \$10 p.a. Family \$15 p.a. Corporate \$20 p.a.</p> <p><i>Qld Baptist Forum</i> 3 issues p.a. Free to Members Others \$2 each posted</p> <p>President: Mr Eric W. Kopittke 98 Yallambee Rd., Jindalee 4074 Phone 3376 4339 kopittke@tpg.com.au</p> <p>Secretary: Dr Ken G. Smith, 110 White St, Graceville 4075 Phone 3379 6117 tizzardsmith@hotmail.com</p> <p>http://home.pacific.net.au/~dparker/bhsq.htm</p> <p>BWA Baptist Heritage & Identity Commission www.bwa-baptist-heritage.org</p>	<p>CONTENTS</p> <p>Qld Baptist Forum No 61 Dec 2005</p> <p>Baptist Heritage Q Annual Report p 2</p> <p>150 year of Baptist Life p 3</p> <p>Launching New History p 5</p> <p>The Lad from Spring Hill (cont) p 6 By Marie Lines</p> <p>BWA Centenary History (review) p 10</p>
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Baptist Historical Society of Queensland

Secretary's Report 21st Annual General Meeting 5 November 2005

2005 has seen continued interest in our history by people in Baptist churches throughout Queensland as we have celebrated the 150th anniversary of the first Baptist church in Queensland.

This culminated in the launching of a new history of Baptist work in Queensland, entitled "Pressing On with the Gospel", at the Assembly in September. The book, edited by Rev. Dr David Parker, with major contributions from Dr Les Ball and Rev. Dr Stan Nickerson, was launched by Mrs Gwyn Milne, President of the Baptist Union of Australia, in a very moving ceremony. Many copies of the book were sold at the time, and a number have been sold since. The Society is grateful to BAPLinK for a grant of \$2,000 towards expenses involved in research and initial work towards the book, and for a loan of \$10,000 to defray the cost of printing 1,000 copies of the book, to be repaid from sales.

There has been little change in the membership of the Society, but we look forward to further interest, as more and more people realise the importance of discovering and remembering our Baptist heritage. Most of our members are of more mature years, and there is a need to inspire more of our young people to take an interest in our historical roots, as one way of reducing the pressure to follow the latest fads in church life and worship.

Officers elected at the Annual meeting in November, 2004 were: President: Mr Eric Kopittke; Secretary: Dr Ken Smith; Treasurer: Rev. Vince Chataway. Due to increased age, and ill-health, Vince Chataway has relinquished the task of Treasurer, which he has held since 1985. His twenty years of faithful service in this position, and support of the work of the society, have been much appreciated, and he will be missed.

Historians are becoming increasingly aware of the need to collect oral reminiscences, since these often contain useful insights which are missing from written records. The importance of recording these is shown by the long list of people consulted during the preparation of the chapters in "Pressing On with the Gospel" dealing with the last 60 years. In some cases these people were able to provide copies of otherwise inaccessible documents, but in most cases it was their memories of events and meetings which provided useful information, and filled in gaps in the written records.

The list of our publications now totals 21. There are still many areas of Baptist life and work in Queensland where a consolidated work would be helpful, and it is hoped that as we have celebrated the 150th anniversary of the opening of the first Baptist church in Queensland, more people will be encouraged to look to our heritage and unearth the many treasures which may be lying around and previously unappreciated.

We need to continue to impress on people the importance of keeping accurate records of events, and preserving them in some permanent form, so that in the future people will be able to look back and be encouraged by our successes, as well as giving thought to reasons for any lack of success.

As we move forward into a new year, we look forward to continuing the work of recording and analysing our history, so that, aware of what has gone on in the past, we may take note of our errors, and preserve and remember the good things, to the glory of our Lord.

Ken Smith, Secretary

Annual Meeting News

The 2005 Annual Meeting was held at the new Archives on Nov 5, and the existing officers were re-elected except that Dr Ken Smith was also appointed as Treasurer. Membership fees are unchanged.

Under discussion were plans for clarifying the current and future management of some historic Baptist cemeteries, especially Vernor which is need of a plan for on-going care. There were also discussions about further research into the development of German Baptist work, this time in the South Burnett areas of Murgon and Nanango. This may carried out in association with family history and the work of other denominations, and has the possibility of an event in 2006.

2006 Baptist Heritage Meetings: 4 March, 3 June, 4 November (to be confirmed)

150 Years of Baptist Life—an Overview

Celebrating 150 years of Baptist Witness and Service in Queensland

This year Baptists mark a century and a half of witness and service in Queensland. During this time more than 150 churches have been established. The first, the Brisbane Baptist Church (now known as the City Tabernacle), was officially formed on 5 August 1855 with 13 members. This step came after a few weeks of colourful preaching by Rev Charles Smith who had come from Parramatta in response to the invitation of a group of Baptists in Brisbane who wanted to start a church.

However, Smith was not the first Baptist minister in Brisbane—that honour goes to Rev Charles Stewart, chaplain on the *Fortitude*, which arrived in January 1849 with a large number of devout Protestants from various denominations. Soon after, the United Evangelical Church (UEC) was formed of Baptist, Congregational and Presbyterian people. It was led very successfully by Charles Stewart until December 1854 when ill health forced him to relinquish the work and return to England. The UEC then broke up and a few months later the Baptists decided to form their own church. The first known Baptist family in Moreton Bay were the Swans - James and Christina who had come even earlier than Stewart, in 1846, to start the paper now known as *The Courier-Mail*.

Charles Smith's flamboyant ways meant that he did not last more than a year or so, and with his departure the infant Baptist cause was in danger of floundering. However, the lay leaders (such as TB Stephens, RA Kingsford and W Moore) were greatly helped by Rev James Voller, of Sydney who visited Brisbane, gave advice, and performed the first baptisms. He also helped them secure Rev BG Wilson as minister, who arrived in 1858 thus setting the cause on a firm footing.

The first expansion was to Ipswich (1860) and then Jireh Church was formed in Fortitude Valley (1861) as a reaction to the practices of BG Wilson. Another such church was formed in Edward Street. Yet Wilson had a fervent vision for Queensland and worked energetically to plant churches around Brisbane and in other areas such as Maryborough (1860, which did not last) and Rockhampton (1862). Within a few years there were also churches at South Brisbane, Windsor Road, Sandgate, Toowong, and Toowoomba.

German Baptists began arriving in Queensland, especially from the 1860s. With a steady stream of new immigrants and very many conversions, they began a series of churches in the West Moreton area - eventually forming their own German Baptist Association which lasted until about 1930. By then their churches were integrated with the mainstream and their people have made a highly significant contribution to the cause.

By 1877 the English speaking churches formed the Baptist Association (now Union) which then took the lead with church planting through the Home Mission (1883); the Foreign Mission fostered work in India from 1885. Sunday Schools were encouraged, and a magazine, now the *Queensland Baptist*, was set up in 1881. Other infrastructure was developed for the successful administration of the denomination. Finally a Theological College was started 1904.

As the 1900s progressed, evangelistic work was organised and churches were established along the coast. However, it was not until after World War Two that the western and inland areas were seriously tackled. Even so, Baptists are most numerous on the coastal fringe and in the populous south-east, while rural and remote churches struggle, and work amongst the marginalised and the inner city areas is small.

Camping was begun in the 1930s. In the post war period, youth work and a book shop were developed, and a start was made on community service work, which has now become a very large ministry. Christian education was developed, especially with the All Age Sunday School system, and an extensive program of evangelistic crusades was mounted. Specialist work among women was commenced in the early 1900s and a men's work was commenced fifty years later. An increasing number of missionaries have been sent to fields in all many parts of the world, and at home, support has been given for ethnic and indigenous ministries of various kinds.

Over the last thirty years enormous changes have taken place in society and Baptist churches have responded in various ways, so that now, many aspects of church life would be all but unrecognizable to the founders. Contemporary worship has become the new tradition, but there are efforts by some, especially by the new emerging or niche churches, to recapture classic aspects of worship lost in recent years. A small percentage of the 170 or so churches are large, but almost half would have fewer than fifty members. New churches are being planted all the time, showing Baptists in Queensland have learned well from their forebears who, like the first Baptist Association President, had a passion for Christ: "*Let us, then, in spirit and in truth, lay as deeply and surely as we can the foundations of this solemn Union, by pledging ourselves to each other, and to our Lord, to do what we can, by word, deed, and sympathy, to promote the spiritual vitality of the Church, and win the colony to Christ.*"

Reaching Queensland for Christ

BG Wilson, pioneer pastor of Wharf St was known for his missionary zeal—he proposed a Colonial Missionary Society—and he was responsible for setting up churches and preaching stations in many parts of Brisbane and the rest of colony. Perhaps the first itinerant evangelists were the Spurgeon's college men, Isaac and Harrison; Spurgeon's own son, Thomas, had successful campaigns. John Macpherson was appointed as City Missionary in 1881, working in the suburbs and with hospitals and prisons.

Then in 1883 the Queensland Baptist Home Mission was set up to take responsibility for church planting. It was not until TU Symonds was appointed full time organiser in 1911 that it really began to produce results. In the wake of World War I, a "King's Business Campaign" and a "Forward Movement" were established.

Rev Thos McColl was supported by an anonymous donor as the first state evangelist for four years. There were also plenty of other evangelists—some were pastors and others itinerants like Wilfred Jarvis and his famous tent missions. After the Second War, Queensland Baptists supported a Gospel Wagon which travelled all over the countryside for several years. This was followed by a series of state evangelists including Reg Wedd and Reg Jarrott. There was great blessing from the Billy Graham crusade of 1959 and later campaigns, especially the Missouri Australia series in the 1960s.

The Home Mission took a leap forward with AH Brooks as Superintendent (1948-57), with the number of stations doubling in a few years; the growth continued under VC Bowring to 1970 when the Home Mission system was virtually closed down. A decade later, MTQ began with its first station at Dysart in 1983. By 2004, it had worked in almost 40 places, and many other churches were commenced as well, seeking to keep up with the state's exploding population.

Reaching the World

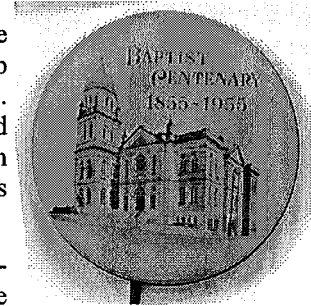
It took thirty years for Baptists in Queensland to organise themselves for overseas mission work. Miss Martha Plested responded in mid-1885 to a call for service in India. The Queensland Baptist Foreign Mission (QBFM) was formed that year and commissioned her for work in East Bengal where she spent the rest of her life. In 1890, Kate Allanby of Windsor Road church joined her, but Kate soon formed her own mission which has become well known in recent times through the ministry of Graham and Gladys Staines.

There were no other missionaries from Queensland for many years but some New Zealanders were supported by the QBFM instead. In 1913, the various state missions merged to form the Australian Baptist Foreign Mission (later ABMS, now GIA). In 1925, the state's second missionary, Rev Ted Smith, arrived on the field. After World War 2, Miss Nola Hodgkinson (now Mrs Nola Hodgson) and Sister Emily Lord joined the team in East Bengal, followed in due course by many others. In the 1960s Queenslanders began to serve in the new field in New Guinea. A number of Queenslanders including Rev Graham and Iris Paulson and Rev Ed Kingston have worked with Aboriginal mission work in Australia, which was taken over by the ABMS in 1978.

In the 100 years after Martha Plested, about 60 missionaries went out from Queensland, but since then there have been nearly as many again! As well these serving with the Baptist mission, hundreds of others from Queensland churches have worked with various interdenominational missions in all parts of the world.

The Power of the Printed Word

Baptists, like other Protestants, are people of "The Book". Books and publications have played an important role – the first known Baptist in Queensland was a newspaper proprietor, and several others were in the same business. In early days, CH Spurgeon's printed sermons circulated widely, to good effect. In 1881, a version of *The Freeman* from Victoria was published in Brisbane, and in 1890 it changed to fully local content under the name *The Queensland Baptist*. In 1913, it ceased publication in favour of a national paper, but the local product resumed in 1923, and has continued ever since. Editors have included outstanding denominational leaders like W Poole, W Bell and AJM Howard. It was made financially viable for many years by the generosity of Smith and Patterson, a printing firm with close Baptist connections. For some time in the 1970s, its publication was uncertain, but later it was made part of the Baptist Union's promotional work. It changed from a magazine format to a tabloid in 1995, and then in April 2003, it became a bi-monthly glossy full colour magazine. A Baptist book room was set up in 1947, selling especially Sunday School material and prize books. It was later managed by people such as J Barrie, D Cran. After facing difficulties, it was sold to its last manager, K Bray, in 1991. The Internet and electronic media have now come into prominence.



Queensland Baptist Centenary Badge, 1955

Launching of the New History

Mrs Gwyn Milne, President of Australian Baptists, launched the new history of Baptists in Queensland to mark the 150th anniversary of the denomination. The ceremony took place at the annual Convention at Ashgrove church on Friday Sept 2nd. An official presentation was also made to the newly appointed President of the Baptist World Alliance, Rev David Coffey, at the final service on Sunday evening, Sept 4th at the City Tabernacle Baptist Church, Wickham Terrace.

The new 200 page book, published by Baptist Heritage Queensland, was written by Dr David Parker (who was also editor), Dr Les Ball and Dr Stan Nickerson. The book updates the last history, *A Fellowship of Service* (by John E White) published almost 30 years ago. It gives extended treatment to the period since 1945 and updates details of earlier periods in the light of recent research. The only other full scale history, edited by Rev Wm Higlett, of Baptists in Queensland was published for the Jubilee in 1905.



Official Guests being greeted by President John Spall: Mrs D. White, Mr R Litzow, Mrs H Smith, Rev R Niebling, Mr DJ Adam.

The launching featured several official guests representing different parts of the Queensland Baptist story, who were greeted by the new President, Pastor John Spall. They included Mr Ray Smith, architect of many earlier Home Mission churches; Mr Doug Adam who was responsible for the introduction of Boys' Brigade to Queensland Baptists; Mrs Betty Grinko of the Slavic church, the oldest multi-cultural church; Mrs Helen Smith who contributed significantly to the development of women's ministries; Mr Reg Litzow, a descendant of a pioneer German Baptist family; Rev Reg Niebling, convenor of the Retired Ministers' Fellowship and Mrs Nola Hodgson who recently celebrated the 60th anniversary of her departure to India with the Australian Baptist mission. Also present were Mrs Doreen White, widow of the author of the last history and Rev John Lane

who contributed to research for the new book.

In launching the book, Mrs Milne said: "Three respected historians pooled their resources and have come up with the perfect gift for a 150th birthday celebration. Your gift of this book comes with unquestionable scholarly rigour, to pass on the heritage of the past in a highly readable form. This book is written with courage and I believe integrity. It does not shrink from the ups and downs of denominational life over 150 years. The authors have drawn on the knowledge of numerous people so this is a team effort. May your conversations continue and reminiscences be for the edification of the present and the future."

"The writer of Ecclesiastes declares 'A cord of three is not easily broken'. *Pressing on with the Gospel* attests to the truth of that. There was the Wharf Street Particular Baptist Church birthed with a small band of people with a passion for evangelism. Then there was the Jireh Strict and Particular Baptists who didn't fully agree with those at Wharf Street but they also clung strongly to the importance of evangelism. Thirdly there were the German Baptists who also passionately believed in the importance of sharing the Gospel. The evangelism passion of the three cords which have intertwined for a century and a half through thick and thin, bring us to this day. Queensland Baptists still share the love of Jesus Christ with people in this huge mission field called Queensland. The cord is not broken."

"The writer to the Hebrews wrote of the cloud of witnesses who urges us on as we run the race looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. My mental picture of that cloud of witnesses is like the stand at the sports track - - packed with saints from the past who cheer for us today as we run the race. This book contains many who I think are part of that cloud of witnesses. So let's celebrate and learn from the past with all its saints and sinners Let's seize the day of the present. Let's dream big and creative for the future - standing on the hill of history for the best view!"

The ceremony was recorded and is available on a DVD from the Queensland Baptists office.

Pressing on with the Gospel

\$20 plus postage \$4

Order from:
BHQ Publications
c/- 98 Yallambee Road,
Jindalee, QLD 4074.

Cheques to Baptist Historical
Society of Queensland.
Phone enquiries
3376 4339 or 3878 3178.

THE LAD FROM SPRING HILL

By Marie Lines

Part 2—continued from the August 2005 issue

THE WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH

In April 1940 Ruth Smith returned to Australia and her husband Ted followed later in the year. It was a time of great difficulty for him as he was looking after several stations. The Second World War had broken out. He was able to get home on one of the last ships to carry passengers. During the years 1940 to 1945, A.E. Smith had several pastorates, including Auburn and East Kew, as well as much deputation work. They had many shifts, but the children enjoyed home life and good schooling.

God was still calling the Smiths to return to an unfinished task. So as soon as the ban on travel was lifted after the war, they were packed and left in a week. They travelled back to East Bengal on a British Line vessel, while Japan was still in the war, in 'blackout' conditions. On more than one occasion the ship changed course and only the Captain knew where they were headed.

The Smith's last period of missionary service was in momentous days for India when they saw the English flag lowered and the Indian flag unfurled as Independence was granted in August 1947. From that time on many things changed; there were strikes, derailments and bloodshed, the British families all left, and the missionaries no protection from police and no one seemed to be in charge.

In 1949 Gwen, Barry and Mrs. Smith returned to Australia with Ted returning at the end of that year. He was leaving India and returning to Australia for the last time and it would have been with many mixed emotions he said good-bye to the people and the land he loved and where he had worked for 24 years.

Looking back on that period, Rev. Doug Ison recalls that A.E. Smith was always travelling, overseeing the churches. Whenever a train whistle went off, he was there with his bedding, basket and water container. He loved his cup of tea. Doug had a beautiful teacup owned by an English magistrate who left after independence. It was huge and held four cups. This was filled as soon as Ted arrived, which would have helped quench his thirst.

Nola Hodgson (nee Hodgkinson), who also worked in East Bengal, recalls that on many occasions over the years she stayed with them. Ruth apparently was quieter; with both of them being loved by everyone. She commented that "Ted had a very good sense of humour".

Ted's son, Barry, has memories of the films made by his father of the people and the work in which he was involved. They were entitled "Pioneering in Assam" and "From Crescent to Cross". Ted filmed the work in the villages, wrote the scripts, edited the films and added sound tracks with his own voice. These films were shown in Australia when he was on deputation. Sadly they cannot be found; as they would be over fifty years old, they most certainly would have deteriorated.

AUSTRALIAN MINISTRY



Rev AE Smith,
President-Elect, BUV

Rev. A.E. Smith arrived back in Australia in 1949, and for another thirty years he ministered to the churches of Victoria. He did not lose his connection with the Mission, whose minutes at the time of his retirement refer to his untiring work. They said:

As a member of Field Council and of many of its important committees, Mr. Smith enriched his contribution to the work on the field. His genial demeanour and pleasing personality contributed always to the happiness of business meetings and social functions. As a preacher and deputationist he has shown outstanding qualities. At the same time the Board pays tribute to the service of Mrs. Smith, and we wish them both, with Gwen and Barry, joyous and fruitful years of service in Australia.



Mrs Ruth Smith

Ted was President of the Baptist Union of Victoria in 1958-1959. What a thrill for him that the guest speaker for that Assembly was Rev. Edward Singha of Assam. It is quite possible that he would have known him.

His ministries in Melbourne were many and varied. He pastored at East Camberwell (1949-1954), Essendon (1954-1961), Elsternwick (1961-1964), Ormond (1964-1967) and Rosebud (1967-1969). He also had a number of interim pastorates. Rev. Peter Evans recalls how his grandfather, Rev. Eric Evans, preceded A.E. Smith at East Camberwell. He remembers as a ten year old being patted on the head by Rev. Smith when he told him he had made a decision to be a Christian. A.E. Smith said "Your parents will be very pleased".

In the history of the Essendon Church 1894-1994, it is recorded that Rev. A.E. Smith was appointed on July 14, 1954. His appointment followed the Church's outward focus. Rev. Smith's experience forged a stable congregation otherwise affected by the changing worldview towards Christianity that it was not as socially desirable as previous generations had viewed it to be.

During his time in Essendon, the Church prepared for the future in practical ways: buying and selling property, building a cottage for the caretaker and establishing a centre for the All Age Sunday School. Sandra Findlay, (nee Welsh) remembers her time at Essendon. She writes:

I cannot remember my first meeting with Rev. A.E. Smith, but 50 years later I still have a very clear picture in my mind's eye of this gentle man. I was born when A.E. was the minister of the Essendon Baptist Church. He dedicated me and some years later Ruth Smith, his wife, was my Religious Education teacher when I was in Grade 2 at the local Primary School. She gave me my first religious "curio"; a picture of Jesus knocking at the door with the text, "Behold I stand at the door and knock" written across it in gold lettering. I remember being so pleased to recognize the stories that she taught the class week by week. A.E. is still A.E. to me. His lack of name, as was politically correct at that time, did not make him distant. He was always dressed in a suit, gave out lollies at the Sunday School picnic, and cheered us on in the novelty races. When I think of him I smile because I am reminded of a warm, welcoming and gentle man who cared for small children. He and Ruth represented Jesus in a real way and gave a young child a wonderful glimpse of God's love. I still have no idea what A.E. stands for – and I don't really care.

During their time at Rosebud the seating was reversed during the Christmas holidays to cope with the large influx of visitors and has been done ever since. Christian films were introduced into the evening service during the month of January and the congregation doubled. In 1983 it was still part of the holiday outreach.

Ted Smith was still preaching in 1978; only two years before his death. He was called to be with Christ on Thursday 7th August 1980 in his eighty-second year. They were living at Gracecourt in Kew, where Mrs. Smith continued to live. These words were written as part of the tribute.

Ted also served for a number of years as chairman of the missionary department and in other denominational posts. He was not so much an organisational man as a man for people. He loved people. He remembered details about them and seldom forgot their name. He was a great missionary colleague, an outstanding preacher, a well loved pastor and a true and faithful minister of Jesus Christ.

Ruth's funeral was held on Friday 10th December 1993 at Canterbury Baptist Church. In the tribute it was written that Ruth was a loving and enthusiastic supporter of her husband in all that he did, and she showed determination, courage and strength through her long career. Her devotion to the Lord was unwavering.

Both Gwen (their daughter) and her husband Rev. Alex Fairbank are deceased. Their children, Ross, Mandy and Malcolm and their families, remember their grandparents lovingly. Barry (their son) and his family have many memories of them and they also loved them dearly.

What a journey! From Reading to Spring Hill, to the City Tabernacle Baptist Church and beyond, this remarkable man, this Lad from Spring Hill, inspires us to embrace faith in Christ; living for Him all the days of our lives.

The Heart and Voice of A.E. Smith

It is a difficult task to write about the work in which the Smiths were involved because of the length and breadth of it. However, A.E. Smith and Mrs. Smith were both excellent communicators and wrote many articles for the Baptist Foreign Missions magazine, "Our Indian Field". Here are snippets of their work on the various stations. Their articles were alive, interesting and full of prayer points for those reading them.

Reading one, entitled "Interpreting the Cross in India", showed such passion in his writings that I am sure he preached it as well.

FARIDPUR

"Boat waiting at Ullapara; join us there." The words flashed along the telegraph wires finally reaching me at Faridpur. I stared out of the carriage window. The flaming dawn of an Eastern day in the rainy season of Bengal. I looked across the great expanse of jute and rice fields, a glorious carpet of green, spread for the feet of the Eternal. Ullapara at last! As we journeyed in the boat Mr. Kelly told me the story of the movement towards Christ among the Nama Sudras. We entered their homes, we talked with them of the things of Christ and we were welcomed. Truly, the breaking dawn has begun. The vastness of the area still uncovered, the number of villages still unreached, the immensity of the task still before us swept over me with appalling intensity."

A convention at Comilla in 1930 proved a wonderful time of refreshment for the Missionaries — "after the most troubled and difficult year of mission work through which we have passed in the last decade. The retirement of older missionaries upon whose advice and long experience we had come to depend, sickness and ill-health had depleted our staff and thinned our ranks."

Ted goes on to say: "Within the little church we gathered day by day and they were wonderful days to us, days in which the Christ seemed nearer, and the work to which we had been called seemed a privilege and a joy; and a perpetual challenge to our manhood and womanhood."

Rev. Smith wrote in 1931:

"Somehow, too, on a Christian compound, there is a vitality and an exuberance you seldom find elsewhere in India. Some day when television and "telehearing" — if we may invent a word — are a fact, we shall be able to tune up to this station and the swing of the life and the flow of energy expressed in song and the whirr of machinery (from the workshops) would amaze you."

In April 1932, he wrote of an exhausting time as he worked on three stations (Serajgunge, Rajbari and Orakandi) and pointed out what a reduction of staff involves for those who are left to carry on. He wrote;

"Our boating tour in the Serajgunge District was the outstanding feature of our last months there. Mrs Smith accompanied me on the tour and found unlimited opportunities for talking with the women of the many villages we visited."

He mentions a service at which Deben Babu spoke with intense fervour and spiritual power on the text: "I was glad when they said unto me let us go into the house of the Lord."

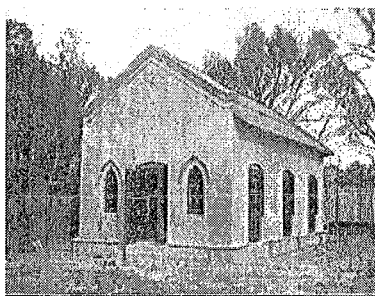
MYMENSINGH.

In December 1937 Rev. A.E. Smith wrote,

"The waters of the large and lovely tank in the Girl's School Compound sparkled in the rays of the early morning sun, responding to the warmth and joy in our hearts on that happy Sunday morning. Yet once more those waters were to be sanctified and consecrated to a sacred service, for three of our girls, and one of our boys were to make public confession of their faith in Jesus Christ, as their own personal Saviour and Lord, by following Him through the waters of Baptism. The girls in their snow-white saris, the boys in their white shirts and dhutis. Two of the girls were Garos, and one of them was the granddaughter of one of the group of four Garo girls who were the first boarders in the Mymensingh Girls School 50 years ago. From that nucleus has developed the splendid school that exists today. No wonder we all felt proud of the achievements of the years."

While in Mymensingh Ted was in charge of the building of the Prayer Room on the Mymensingh

(Continued from page 8)



The New Jubilee Prayer Room, Mymensingh.

Girls' School compound. Rev. Trevor Farmilo remembers sitting on the hard concrete floor for countless hours as many church meetings were held in the chapel. This was opened during the Jubilee Celebrations of the school. Miss Jess Redman wrote in May 1938.

"All sat facing the new house of prayer, as the speaker, Mr. Smith led our thoughts first to the sanctuary in the wilderness, and then to the new prayer room before us. After the singing of a prayer of dedication everyone moved with beating hearts towards the front doors, tied fast with a golden ribbon. Then as Mr. Smith declared the new chapel open to the glory of God, little Bilu's Ma, a foundation scholar of the school, untied the ribbon and passed through the door. Twelve other old students followed her and as they opened the remaining doors and windows, the glory of the morning sunshine streamed in to greet the band of worshippers who entered. It was scene long to be remembered. Mr. Baldwin led us in the prayer of dedication. That same evening was held the first service in the new sanctuary – the communion service with which the jubilee celebrations were so beautifully brought to a close"

PABNA

They arrived back in Pabna in September 1945 after being in Australia for five years (during the war). It was in Darjeeling, when they took Gwen and Barry back to school, that they heard the news of the Japanese surrender and the great world-sigh of relief that the war had ended. Ted wrote:-

"Yet, we heard the call to return and it is good to feel again that we are back in the larger Field, with all that this means of toil and responsibility. I go to Sirajganj tomorrow, and after returning I plan to visit Orakandi. Pabna offers still a wide field for our Evangelistic work, and I am making plans for Cool Season Itineration."

COMILLA – INDEPENDENCE DAY - 1947

"It is noon of India's 'Great Day' and I write to let you know all is well. I had talks with Indian leaders during the week, and my impression was that both sides were most anxious that the transition of power, as far as Comilla was concerned, should be accomplished in an atmosphere of peace and harmony. At midnight on the 14th the announcement came over the radio, great crowds had gathered outside the Town Hall, where special lighting arrangements had been made, and then the voice was heard through the amplifiers, the cheering swelled to a roar. Then the 101 bomb explosion began. Mr. Schubert and I stood on the roof of the Mission Bungalow and watched the flares of light against the sky. At 1.20a.m. it was all over. At 8am we gathered in the church for prayer. Invitations to this meeting had been given throughout the town and some 'strangers' attended. The blessing of God was sought on the birth of the New Dominion for its peaceful progress during the ensuing years. There is, in my opinion no hostile attitude whatsoever towards us as foreigners. We walked freely amid the throngs and no whisper against our presence was heard."

Ruth wrote about the last few years of their missionary service:-

"It was at this time Mahatma Gandhi was striving to bring peace out of chaos. Then, when he was in jail, great prayer meetings were held in Comilla in which Mr. Smith took part. So with Moslem, Hindu, Buddhist and many others, a Christian prayer for peace was included. Another great gathering was held after Gandhi's death."

Much prayer was offered also in Australia.

SOURCES FOR ARTICLE: Mrs. Ruth Smith, Mrs. Gwen Fairbank, Mr. Barry Smith, Family personal papers and reflections, Brisbane City Council, City Tabernacle Baptist Church Year Books & Minutes, Mrs. Ruth Elfverson, Rev. Harry West, Mr. Garth Elvery, Miss Nola Fulwood, "A History of Baptist Camping in Queensland" by Joan Maxwell, The Baptist Historical Society of Queensland, Dr. David Parker, "The Martha Plested Story" by Dr. David Parker, "Rev. A.H. Brooks and His Family Heritage" by Pastor John Brooks, Global Interaction Australia Archives, Rev. Trevor Farmilo, Queensland Baptist College of Ministries records, Victorian Baptist Historical Society, Rev Doug Ison, Mrs. Nola Hodgson, Mrs. Sandra Findlay, Rev. Peter Evans; Photos—supplied by the author.

***Baptists Together in Christ 1905-2005:
A Hundred-Year History of the Baptist World Alliance***

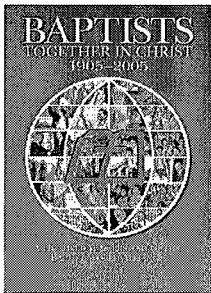
Edited by Richard V. Pierard

Falls Church, Virginia: BWA, 2005 1-931985-13-8 Pb pp358 Index Bibliog US \$15.00

Reviewed by David Parker

Baptists Together in Christ is a scholarly history of the BWA covering 1905 to 2005, the voluntary association national Baptist unions and conventions around the world, embracing over 100 million people. The book was launched at the Centenary Congress held in Birmingham, UK in July 2005.

It consists of ten chapters telling the story in chronological sequence from the pre-history prior to 1905 up to 2005. The authors are drawn from North America, UK, Europe and Australia, with overall editing by well-known Baptist historian, Richard V. Pierard and two associate editors. The Foreword is by Billy Graham (a featured speaker at most of the recent BWA world congresses) and the Afterword by the current General Secretary, Dr Denton Lotz. The fully indexed and documented text is supported by a large number of photographs of Baptist life around the world, several lists of BWA officials, staff and conferences, and an annotated bibliography. An additional feature is a series of boxes and photographs providing cameos of presidents and other leading figures in the movement such as John Clifford, G.W. Truett and Nilson Fanini. Ken Manley of Melbourne, whose history of Australian Baptists is due to be published soon, wrote the final chapter on the current period.



Although the Baptist movement is now approaching its 400th anniversary, and for much of that time the “fellowship of kindred minds” even on a global basis has been positive, as this book shows, global organisation has come rather late. Even now, with more well over 200 unions or conventions in membership, and others joining all the time, as a voluntary movement, the BWA still does not embrace all Baptists – the most notable group now not in membership is the large Southern Baptist Convention which withdrew in the 100th year over ideological differences.

As a denomination made up of independent churches and unions, and without a central hierarchy, the issue of interest to scholars and church people is whether such a global organisation was proper, necessary, or important, and even granted a positive answer, whether it could in fact be achieved.

The saga unfolded in these pages shows how the able and dedicated leadership of some outstanding people such as Clifford, Shakespeare, Prestridge and many others, built on the groundswell of the grass roots support, and was able to overcome all kinds of obstacles. It managed to deal with the effects of two world wars and other decisive conflicts in which substantial numbers of Baptists were on both sides of the lines of hostilities. In due course, there emerged an organisation that is neither exclusively church or para-church, but one that effectively harnesses its members around the world for evangelism, mission, theological education, and ministry with youth, women and men. Its greatest achievements over a substantial period of its life have undoubtedly been in the area of advocacy for justice and religious freedom and latterly, aid and relief. Holistic mission of this kind is appropriately flagged by Lotz (along with evangelism and nurture) as key ministries for the future.

For much of its history, the truly global character of the BWA was dream, dominated as it was by European and North American interests. But as time progressed, it has become more internationalised in its personnel and interests, and more regionalised in its programs. Perhaps more importantly it has become a voice for many in diverse parts of the world who desperately need it, especially in relation to the vision and comprehensive range of values it has embodied and expressed.



Queenslanders en route to the Jubilee Congress 1955

Much of the narrative of a book like this necessarily involves details of organisation and programs, yet the authors have also succeeded in presenting the dynamic which has driven the movement and the varied personalities that have led it. In particular the content of speeches, papers and reports have been effectively summarised, so that interested readers are able to interact with the substance of global Baptist thinking, which gives a feel for the developments that have been documented.

There are plenty of issues facing Baptists around the world and as a global body, many of which are listed in Lotz’s thoughtful Afterword, including social justice, the nature of church and ministry, and ways of effective evangelism. This volume indicates that the BWA is likely to make a significant contribution on these topics, as it has in the past. But perhaps the more substantial question, which is not addressed, is the role of a global church body in a post-denominational age.

FILE

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The Journal of the Baptist Heritage Queensland

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