

The Queensland Baptist Forum

The Journal of the Baptist Heritage Queensland

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The End of an Era

The end of a long era occurred at this year's Convention Business Day when the position of President of the Baptist Union was abolished; 115 men and one woman served since James Voller was the inaugural president in 1877 (there was no appointment in 2010). This action was mooted last year and the report said that some of the factors included difficulty in getting nominations and the lack of a clear role. However, it was strongly stated in the discussion last year and again this year that the pastoral role of the President, especially in the case of country churches, was of vital importance. Another factor mentioned in the Report was confusion in the minds of the churches about the respective roles of the General Superintendent and President. Related to this has been the situation where the President does not actually preside at Assemblies or Board meetings. These factors and others have all combined to progressively downgrade the status of the position over the years to being an increasingly irrelevant figurehead in contrast with the GS.

In 1969 it was decided to appoint a General Superintendent (GS) instead of a General Secretary as the Executive Officer of the Union. The downgrading of the Presidential role, however, began in 1989 when it was decided the GS would be the "spiritual leader" as well as organisational leader of the Union, which therefore rendered the President's role ultimately obsolete. It has been a long time coming but this year's decision was inevitable in view of that move and other collateral developments in recent years. No action was taken on the clearly expressed views last year to find a way to continue the valuable pastoral role of the President. It seems likely that Chairman of the Board who presides at Board and Assembly meetings will take over some of formal functions of the President but this is not satisfactory because this position is not elected by the churches but only by the Board itself.

What is clear, however, is that the elimination of the position of President means that the nature of the Baptist Union has been profoundly altered so that now the official leader is a staff appointment rather than a direct representative of the members who comprise the Union; "Qld Baptists" is now officially a corporate body servicing the churches, not an association (or Union) of churches expressing and fostering unity and for mutual benefit and cooperative action as it has been since 1877. It is not surprising that churches are now often turning to other forms of association to meet their needs.



Archives on Display

The Baptist Church Archives has been given a smart new glass fronted display cabinet to house some of its most important records. Dr David Loder, QB General Superintendent is shown inspecting the earliest Minute books of the Baptist Union dating from 1877 on the top shelf. The lower shelves house recent Board and Admin Minutes, bound in bright blue and orange.

The next planning meeting of BHQ will be the AGM 5 Nov at 2pm You are invited to attend.

Baptist Heritage Queensland <i>The Baptist Historical Society of Queensland</i> (est. 1984)	CONTENTS
Membership (2011) Individual \$10 p.a. Family \$15 p.a. Corporate \$20 p.a. <i>Qld Baptist Forum</i> 3 issues p.a. Free to Members Others \$2 each posted President: Mr Eric W. Kopittke 98 Yallambee Rd., Jindalee 4074 Phone 3376 4339 kopittke@tpg.com.au Secretary: Dr Ken G. Smith, 2301/15 Cansdale Street, Yeronga, Qld 4104 Phone 3892 6337 tizzardsmith@hotmail.com http://home.pacific.net.au/~dparker/bhsq.htm BWA Baptist Heritage & Identity Commission www.bwa-baptist-heritage.org	Qld Baptist Forum No 79 Aug 2011 The End of an Era p 1 Archives on Display p 1 Our Elusive Rev. Charles Smith by David Parker p 2 The SGMU by Bill Hughes p 8 Vale—Rev Mel Williams p 8

Our Elusive Rev. Charles Smith

By David Parker

(with acknowledgement of research and text by Barbara Coe, Canberra - used with permission)

Rev Charles Smith was the first minister of the Brisbane Baptist Church. The church, known later as Wharf Street and from 1890 as the City Tabernacle, was formed on 5 Aug 1855 and Smith was pastor only until late in 1856.

He is not to be confused with another Baptist minister (with the same initials), Rev Charles Stewart, who arrived in Moreton Bay in 1849 and led the United Evangelical Church (UEC) until the end of 1854. This church included Baptists (along with Presbyterians and Congregationalists). Stewart was the first Baptist minister in Brisbane, but not the first minister of a Baptist church. After Stewart left the colony in ill-health on 3 Jan 1855, the UEC disbanded. This led the way to the establishment of the Baptist church a few months later.

Stewart was a man of considerable ability, character and success but Smith was not! In fact, he was more like his earlier counterpart in Sydney, Rev John McKaeg, who was also the pioneer of the Baptist cause in that place, but one who did not remain long in his role; in fact his life ended very sadly indeed.

In Baptist histories, Smith's career in Brisbane is usually dismissed in a line or two, stating simply that he came from Parramatta NSW, was installed as the first pastor and departed again after a short time, leaving the church in a difficult situation from which it barely recovered. However, one history says that should not have merely been allowed to leave town but should have been hunted out of the place!

Thanks to the digitisation of Australian newspapers now freely available on-line, it has become easy to find out more about Smith, but there are still many loose ends. A lot of the new research on Smith has been carried out by Barbara Coe of Canberra who has done a similar project on Sydney's John McKaeg. This paper is deeply indebted to Barbara's prodigious work.

A report from a Moreton Bay correspondent in *The Sydney Morning Herald* 21 Aug 1855 stated:

The Baptists are making exertions, which are stated as likely to be attended with success, to establish a church in this place. The Rev. Charles Smith, of Parramatta, has been preaching to the people of that denomination for the last two or three Sundays, in the Exchange Rooms, and I observe it stated, apparently on

authority, that he is likely to become the pastor of the infant church.

On the same day, the *Empire* carried the same story as well, although with more detail.

The Baptists resident in Brisbane, have obtained the loan of the Exchange Room as a temporary place of worship, and I hear that it is intended to form a church in this place. In coming to this conclusion, the prominent promoters of this desirable movement have laid a broad foundation, and have signified their intention of acting as liberally as possible, and avoiding those narrow minded views which are too often permitted to creep into newly-established religious congregation. It is generally expected that the Rev. Charles Smith, of Parramatta, will be appointed as the first minister, and, judging from his present popularity, it is expected that the congregations will be well sustained.

The history of the Parramatta, *Baptists in the Cradle City: The Story of Parramatta Baptist Church 1838-1986* written by Hubert Watkin-Smith in 1986, confirms this. It even gives a quotation from Smith's utterances on the topic of the revival of the church there in the face of apparent disharmony. According to this history (p 156), Charles Smith appeared at Parramatta in September 1854, and after six months, accepted a call (p 34). But he was deeply concerned about the church's state, and appealed to the people to take stock of themselves for fear the church would die, never to be revived again. Watkin-Smith (p 40) decided that 'Mr Smith must soon have concluded that his appeal had not brought an adequate response for six weeks later he sought leave to help a small group to establish a Baptist Church in Brisbane, and finding encouragement there, he did not return'. However, Watkin-Smith also notes (p 34), citing the church Minutes, that there were 'Letters from Mr Smith suggest[ing] that the object of his visit would take more time to accomplish than anticipated, and in August, he resigned the pastorate as "the Lord had opened a door of usefulness in the Moreton Bay district"'.

Certainly, Parramatta church had a difficult history in the next few years. However, a full search of its records has not revealed any further useful information about Smith's origins or connections. However, a

search of Sydney newspapers (by use of trove.com.au digitisation) gives a few references to his activities.

He is mentioned in *The Sydney Morning Herald* in 6 Jan 1855, when he attended a social evening at the Bathurst Street Baptist Chapel in Sydney on 4 January to commemorate the anniversary of the Rev James Voller's arrival in Sydney; Smith, as the minister of Parramatta church was one of the speakers.

In the same paper, on 22 March 1855, he was mentioned as passing on nearly £13 raised by both Parramatta and Smithfield Baptist churches to a Patriotic Fund. (This is confirmed in the Parramatta Minutes.) About this time, Smithfield was linked with Parramatta but in 1895 it became a member of the Particular Baptist Association. Smith was also a speaker at the anniversary of Goulburn Street Baptist Church on 22 April 1855 (SMH 20 April 1855).

However, the next reference to him is in the shipping information indicating that he had left Sydney on the coastal vessel the *Boomerang* on 28 Jun 1855 for Brisbane (SMH 29 June 1855); there were no other family members mentioned. The *Moreton Bay Courier* of 7 July 1855 duly reported that he arrived on 1 July.

An advertisement in the *Moreton Bay Courier* 7 July 1855 announced that Smith would be the preacher at the inaugural services to be held in the Exchange Room of the Court House on the following day at 11am and 6:30pm. On 11 August 1855, the establishment of the church was reported.

Formation of a Baptist Church.

Some five or six weeks ago, the members of the Baptist Denomination in Brisbane and its vicinity, obtained the loan of the Exchange Room as a temporary place of worship, with a view of testing whether they were sufficiently numerous, united, and cordial, to warrant the formation of a Church in their midst. The result of this experiment seems to have been favourable to the object in view; as we hear they have gone through the few necessary forms of constitution which the simplicity of their Denominational machinery requires. We are glad to find that those who have taken a prominent part in this movement have adopted liberal views, and laid their foundations on a broad basis. We are informed, that with a simple guarantee that the office-bearers be Baptist, there is to be no restriction, or hindrance thrown in the way of members of other Denominations who may either find it convenient, or think it desirable to unite with them. We think this is as it should be, and augers well for future success. Though no definite arrangement

had, as yet, been made, we find there is a pretty general expectation, that the Rev. Chas. Smith, of Paramatta [sic], will resign his present charge, and become first pastor of the infant Church.

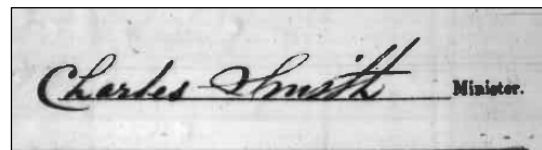
A short time later there was a report that a meeting had been held on 4 September 1855 attended by ministers of various churches in Brisbane and interested friends to show their support for the new church (MBC, 8 Sept 1855).

In the following months, Smith's name appears in the newspaper a few times indicating that he was taking his place in local community. For example, he was at the foundation of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Ipswich on 8 October 1855 (MBC 13 Oct 1855). He was in attendance at two meetings of the Wesleyan church, on 15 January 1856 (MBC 19 Jan 1856) and a Good Friday missionary meeting held at German Station (Nundah) (MBC 29 Mar 1856). On 10 August 1855 and again on 15 September 1856 he participated in public meetings protesting against state aid for religions and he moved or seconded resolutions (MBC 18 Aug 1855, 20 Sept 1856).

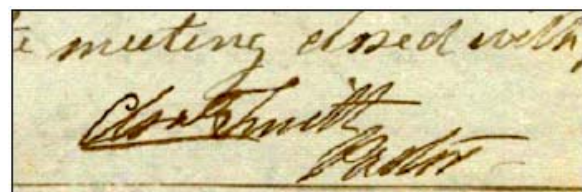
He also participated in a large meeting in support of aboriginal missionary work by the Moreton Bay Aborigines' Friends Society on 21 Nov 1855 when a report on an extended tour of southern Queensland by Rev William Ridley was presented. This meeting was attended by all the ministers and other leading church people of the town. The report revealed a great deal of interesting information about the aborigines and their interaction with European culture. (The Empire, 12 Dec 1855; MBC 24 Nov 1855)

He was on the lecture roster of the School of Arts. In July 1856, he gave a two-part lecture on 'The Land we live in' which was said by the paper to be sure to

Two Signatures—are they by same person?
If so, then our Charles Smith is the one who also pastored in Sandhurst, Bendigo!



Signature of Charles Smith at the marriage of James Holloway and Edith Critchley at the Baptist Congregation, Parramatta on 7 June 1855.



Signature of Charles Smith in the Minutes of a special church meeting at Sandhurst, Bendigo on 22 May 1861

'amuse and edify' the listeners. The reports of the lectures which followed (MBC 14, 19 July 1955) indicated that they had certainly fulfilled this promise. Smith was 'listened to very attentively' and his speech was 'greeted by marked tokens of approbation'. The subject 'afforded a wide range to the lecturer's powers of delineating our Australian scenery, and the vast resources of this island continent'. The lectures were not a travelogue but a vision of the historical significance of the settlement of the land by Europeans and an extremely optimistic vision of its potential and economic development. Smith was a capable speaker and was able to marshal a wide range of information into an inspiring oration.

He performed at least one marriage 'by special licence' – that of Thomas Whittaker to Ellen O'Leary on 14 October 1856 (MBC 18 Oct 1856); another one had been performed in Sydney, James Holloway to Edith Critchley on 7 June 1855, again by special licence (SMH 9 June 1855).

Shipping records show him departing Brisbane on 28 Nov 1855 on the *Shamrock* for Sydney, but although there is no notice of his return, his absence was apparently only temporary.

What is more significant is that on 14 September 1856 Dr John Dunmore Lang preached for him (MBC 13 Sept 1856), and then only two months later, a notice indicates that he has had periods of illness which have prevented him from carrying out his duties. So serious had these become that he felt it was necessary to move away for the sake of his health. He was therefore resigning his pastorate. 'Friendly' discussions took place between him and the church officers on 4 November, as the following report stated (MBC 8 Nov 1856):

We are sorry to hear that the Rev. Chas. Smith – whose impaired health has of late necessitated frequent interruptions in the discharge of ministerial duty – has deemed it necessary to resign the charge of the Baptist Church in this town, in order that he may avail himself of a period of cessation of labour, for the purpose of seeking its complete restoration. We hear that the deacons and members invited Mr. Smith to a friendly tea meeting on Tuesday evening last, the proceedings at which were interesting and pleasant both to minister and people.

The shipping records show 'Mr Smith' departing on the *Shamrock* on 15 November 1856, and 'Rev Mr Smith' arriving in Sydney on 21 November (MBC 22 Nov 1856; SMH 22 Nov 1856).

In April 1857, Rev James Voller, the minister of Bathurst Street Baptist Church, Sydney made an important visit to Brisbane to advise and help the

church. The report notes that Smith terminated his pastorate 'five or six months ago' (MBC 16 May 1857), which accords with the reports of his resignation. Records of the Brisbane Baptist Church show that Smith's departure created a crisis and it was only the wise advice and personal support of Voller (which included conducting the first baptisms in the town) that enabled the church to survive. Lay preachers such as RA Kingsford, W Moore and W Grimes led the church until the arrival of Rev Benjamin Gilmore Wilson in 1858 who put the church on an extremely firm footing.

The above picture is the one painted by the public reporting and presents Rev Charles Smith as a man who responded to a need in Brisbane and took his place in the growing community but was forced to exit due to health concerns. However, there are other stories about Smith which do not paint such a positive picture!

Mr (later the Rev) William Moore was a participant in the early days of the church and served for a long period as a leader and pastor. In 1886, he wrote, on request, a short history of Baptists in Brisbane. In this document, he stated that Smith 'for some time resided in New South Wales' and was appointed pastor 'with the guarantee of £150 per year'. He said that upon commencing service, 'for a time everything went on well. We had large congregations in proportion to the population – for 30 years ago a much larger proportion of the people respected the Sabbath and attended the house of God, than are doing so at the present time'. Sunday Schools and preaching stations were established in some of the suburbs. However, Moore goes on to say, 'about the end of our first year it became evident that Mr. Smith was not the right man to do the required work'. Finally, it was time to act:

After some months had passed it was thought best that Mr. Smith should leave, and he went back to Sydney; and thus the Church in its infancy was left without a pastor, and from the fact that Mr. Smith at the first was rather popular in drawing the people his early removal had a damaging effect, and we felt ourselves in rather a difficult position, all the members of the Church were either struggling in business or seeking in some way or another to secure a holdfast in this new country, and we all needed the help and guidance of a spiritual teacher. (*The Queensland Freeman*, Feb 1886, p 4)

The church printed its annual report in the Moreton Bay Courier 24 August 1859 newspaper and included in it a short history. It confirmed Moore's account:

The Rev. Charles Smith, the only minister in the colony known to be at liberty, was invited to spend a month here, with a

view to his taking the pastorate; and at the close of that period he accepted the unanimous invitation of the church to become its pastor, which office he held until November in the following year. During this period of fifteen months, the services were held in the Police Court, the congregation usually numbering between 70 and 100 persons; and twenty-three members were (sic) added to the church.

At the Jubilee of Baptist of Baptist work in Queensland in 1905, an official history was published. The final edition was a shortened version of earlier drafts. It repeated the view that Smith was 'unsuitable' stating, 'The newly-formed Church invited Rev. Charles Smith, from Sydney, to become their pastor, but he proved unsuitable, and returned after fifteen months' (p 50).

An earlier draft published as *The Gregory History of Queensland Baptists* (1995, p 9) repeated references to the strength of support for the church in the early stages, but did not attribute any reason for Smith's departure.

The congregations for a time were from the limited population of that time large, and of an inspiring character, and continued so for the first 12 months; but on their Minister returning to Sydney from whence he came a short time before, matters did not continue to have that look of hopefulness they were hitherto wont to do.

Hints of Smith's non-suitability are made highly explicit in another document. Joshua Jenyns was a Baptist who arrived in Brisbane on 22 December 1854, which was right at the very end of Charles Stewart's ministry at the United Evangelical Church. He wrote a personalised view of developments in a paper called, 'Fruit from the Tree of Experience' subtitled, 'The church needs manhood more than machinery' (which has been published by Baptist Heritage Queensland). Soon after arrival, he was told that the Baptists were 'in a divided and unsatisfactory state' and so joined the Methodists for about four years.

This is his account of the formation of the Baptist church which took place while he was with the Methodists:

Meanwhile the few Baptists 15 or about formed themselves into a church, and had for their first Pastor a Rev Chas. Smith (if my memory serves me right) who however did not cement them together much, he being chargeable with unbecoming conduct was given a purse of money to go away which he did. Some there were, however, who Said that a horse-whip

would have been more suitable pay for the Revd. Gentleman, and held aloof from their Baptist brethren on that account to the day of their death.

Jenyns went on in his personal story to have very strong words to say about some of the subsequent developments in the Baptist community, especially in relation to Rev BG Wilson. He gave high praise to some of the people, and condemned others equally strongly. His views are therefore highly coloured and as he was not personally involved with the Baptists at the time of Smith's pastorate, he did not necessarily have access to the full story.

However, it would seem that the Baptists did not think that Smith was the man to lead and develop the church despite his success in attracting crowds (at least initially) and so he was asked to leave; he was not the last to suffer such a fate! Whether or not the church was correct in its assessment, the man they got to replace him was certainly the opposite, even though they had to endure a lot of heartache in the interim. Jenyns, however, was not so sure about the overall virtue of that second pastor, but that is another story.

The information we have about Smith from the public, church and private records in Brisbane does not tell us much about him, and certainly does not give any hint of his background or later ministry; he is to that extent like Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:3) – without ancestry or off-spring!

Baptist church records in Sydney do not help to inform us about Smith's activities once he stepped from the *Shamrock* on 21 November 1856. There are some newspaper references to a 'Rev Charles Smith' but it is difficult to know if it is the same person.

However, he is definitely identified in one newspaper reference which refers to a lecture given in Windsor, NSW, in June 1857, a few months after his return to the area. (The Parramatta minutes indicated he had come from there originally.) The title of the lecture is similar but not exactly the same as his series in the School of Arts in Brisbane about a year earlier, as *The Sydney Morning Herald* report (18 June 1857) indicated.

Windsor.

Lecture. On Monday evening last, Mr. Charles Smith (formerly pastor of a Baptist congregation at Brisbane) delivered a highly interesting lecture in the Debating Society's room, on the popular subject – "The age we live in." Dr. Day, J.P, presided and introduced Mr. Smith to the audience, which was large and respectable – not less than 150 persons being present, including the ladies and families of most of the leading residents of the

town. Mr. S., in a most pleasing and instructive manner, took a rapid but comprehensive view of the present state of mundane affairs, comparing the infancy of the world with its present manly growth; exhibiting now, in contradistinction to primeval simplicity and ignorance, a testing and enquiring spirit; being eminent in the arts and sciences, yet remarkable for its diversity of sentiment in religion and politics; and wonderful in its discoveries and inventions – some of the latter, however, being rather ludicrous, Mr. S. illustrated the follies of the age by a number of most amusing anecdotes, which he related with dramatic effect, and concluded with an encomium on the efforts now being made in Windsor to establish a School of Arts and Literary Institute, which he wished every success. Mr. S. was repeatedly applauded in the course of his remarks, which were the more effective from being delivered extempore, and on finishing was greeted with loud marks of approbation. On the motion of Mr. William Walker, seconded by Mr. Champion, a vote of thanks was unanimously awarded to the lecturer for the ability and entertainment he had displayed, and the assembly separated highly pleased, and in the hope that Mr. S. will soon favour them with another intellectual treat of a similar kind.

The Melbourne *Argus* 15 April 1858 had a notice nearly another year later, in April 1858, announcing a lecture of the same name exactly as the Brisbane one given by a 'Mr Charles Smith' of Sydney:

Melbourne Mechanics' Institution.

Mr. Charles Smith, from Sydney, will lecture at the above Institution on Thursday evening next. Subject – "The Land we Live In." Mr. Smith has lectured in connection with the School of Arts in Sydney, and kindred Institutions throughout the colony New South Wales, with considerable success.

Because of the School of Arts connections, it seems more than likely that this is our Mr Smith.

The next reference we have to Smith is also in connexion with the School of Arts. *The Sydney Morning Herald* of 26 August 1859 reports that a 'Rev C Smith' was one of several clergy and others elected to the twelve-strong committee of the Campbelltown School of Arts at its foundation on 25 August at a strongly supported meeting held in the Assembly Room opposite the Post Office.

These appearances were in NSW, but within a few

months, a Rev Charles Smith was found as pastor of the Sandhurst (Bendigo) Baptist Church in Victoria. The history of that church refers to the appointment in April 1860. A history of the city by George Mackay, *Annals of Bendigo*, published in 1912 (Vol 1, p 66), states:

The first anniversary services of the Sandhurst Baptist Church were held on 26th February, 1860, the Rev. D. Rees, of Melbourne, officiating. The Rev. Charles Smith was elected pastor in April.

This is verified by the official history of the Baptist Union of Victoria by FJ Wilkin, *Baptists in Victoria – Our First Century 1838-1938* (published in 1939 by the Baptist Union of Victoria, p 44):

The Rev. E. Henderson only stayed one year [from November 1857 to about February 1860], and the Rev. C. Smith, who followed him, [stayed] only 18 months.

According to the *Launceston Examiner*, 21 March 1861, during his time in Sandhurst, Smith visited Launceston in March 1861:

[Launceston]

Baptist Chapel.

Two sermons will be preached on Sunday next [24th], in the Baptist Chapel, York-street, by the Rev. Charles Smith, Minister of the Baptist Church, Sandhurst, Victoria.

Two days later the same paper read:

Baptist Chapel.

Two sermons will be preached on Sunday next, the 24th March by the Rev. Charles Smith, Baptist Minister at Sandhurst, Victoria; after which collections will be made to aid in effecting necessary repairs to the above-named place of worship.

March 20.

In fact, Charles preached at Launceston for a month (*Launceston Examiner*, Tuesday 23 April 1861).

Baptist.

The Rev. H. Dowling of Launceston, conducted the services during the month at the Baptist Chapel, Hobart Town. Mr. Dowling's place at Launceston was supplied during his absence by the Rev. C. Smith of Sandhurst, Victoria.

Tamar-street Independent Chapel, which has lately been repaired and decorated, was reopened on Sunday, 31st March. The Rev. C. Price, the pastor of the

church, conducted divine service in the morning, and the Rev. Charles Smith, of Sandhurst, Victoria, preached in the evening to a large congregation. Collections were made after the services in aid of the fund for repairs to the chapel.

Smith's ministry at Sandhurst (Bendigo) came to a conclusion in September 1861, as the city history (page 94) noted:

From September, 1861, to March, 1863, the Baptist Church was without a pastor, and in March the Rev. Thomas Taylor was elected.

His time there was less than 18 months. The church's own history, *Until This Time ... Following Jesus – Changing Our World at Bendigo Baptist Church 1859-2009*, (p 5) describes the period in a little more detail.

An offer from the Rev. Charles Smith to come for one to three months was immediately accepted and he commenced his engagement with the Church on the 22nd April 1860. Following an evening service in May a Prayer Meeting was held imploring the Lord to pour out His Spirit and revive the Church. "The Lord's presence was truly felt in our midst." A period of revival did occur with many seeking to join the Church through transfer or baptism.

If this was the same Mr Smith who had been in Brisbane five years earlier, he had a repetition of his success there, and he conducted a third short pastorate! However, disaster of a worse kind was to occur. He was not only judged to be merely 'unsuitable' but in fact, guilty of committing an offence!

The church history tells the story (p 6):

When all was going so well, on Sunday the 8th September 1861, a meeting was called at which Mr David Buchan introduced a very painful and humiliating case which had brought them together. The Rev. Charles Smith had tendered his resignation with great sorrow and contrition. He had sinned against God and man and caused injury to the Church, destroying the good effect of his labour, by his "improper and unbecoming familiarity" with a member of the congregation. Attempts to find replacement were unsuccessful, the rent for the site of the Chapel became a problem and so the building was sold to Lansell for £40 and the Temperance Hall rented.

This sad episode was the subject of a cryptic article in the *Bendigo Advertiser* of 19 September 1861.

The Wolf Amongst the Flock.

As pretty a bit of pious scandal as ever delighted the gossips of a small community, has been going the round in Sandhurst for the last day or two. The story is that the reverend shepherd of a certain flock, who congregated in one of the dissenting conventicles in Sandhurst, has latterly been suspected of seeking the society of one of his female disciples oftener than was absolutely requisite for the purposes of spiritual consolation. The husband – for the fair convert was married – getting proof more ocularly convincing than pleasant that the shepherd had betrayed his trust, more just than wise, published the facts of the case to others of the congregation. Not waiting, it is said, for explanations, or perhaps fearing further expositions of his little pious peccadillos, the shepherd, barely provided with staff or scrip, has suddenly disappeared from Sandhurst.

There is no absolute certainty that this was the same Rev Charles Smith who was in Brisbane, but the dating is not against the idea, and there are the same qualities – initial attraction and outstanding success, followed by unsatisfactory behaviour, and sudden departure after only a short pastorate. In the case of Brisbane, Smith's failings were apparently accepted by Smith and the church, but in Bendigo, Mr Smith had fallen lower—he was a little more like Sydney's John McKaeg who ended up in a debtor's prison.

There is no further certain information about Rev Charles Smith, although there is one other newspaper reference. The 9 April 1863 issue of the *Sydney Morning Herald* carried an advertisement about a lost poodle bitch which answered to the name of 'Tiny'. It stated that a reward was available if the unfortunate animal were found; the money would be paid by a certain 'H. Smith' of the London Chartered Bank, Sydney or 'the Rev. C. Smith, Penrith'.

If this is the same man, he has been rehabilitated as a minister at least to the extent of being an agent for the payment of reward; and it may be that we learn of a family member – someone, a person who works at a bank, perhaps in a senior position. Apart from this, there is no reference anywhere on record to his family and with a common name like his, checking the records is virtually impossible. In this respect, he is like his predecessor in Brisbane – we know only a little of Charles Stewart's family, and his name is as common as Charles Smith!

THE SENIOR GIRLS MISSIONARY UNION

In 1923 when the Senior Girls Missionary Union (SGMU) commenced in Queensland life was considerably different for women than it is today. Most married women were not in paid employment and church-women generally had more time to devote to church work. This meant that the SGMU was able to attract large numbers of women around Australia to work in support of the overseas missions. At time, the SGMU in Queensland the SGMU had more than 350 members in over twenty-seven branches in local Baptist churches around the state.

The SGMU was created to provide prayer, financial and personal support to Baptist missionaries in India, particularly that part of India which is now called Bangladesh. It operated in Queensland from 1923 to 1966, when its name was changed to the Queensland Baptist Missionary Union. Further changes were made in subsequent years as young women moved into the general workforce and it became necessary to adopt different strategies to support our missionaries. By the 1990s the SGMU had ceased to operate as a separate and distinct entity.

A history of the Senior Girls Missionary Union SGMU is currently being written. It tells the stories of the amazing women who were associated with the organisation both in Australia and in foreign lands. The first Australian Baptist missionaries to India were women – they were the ones who first brought Christ to India. And at home they were supported by this exceptionally successful organisation—the SGMU.

Comparatively large amounts of money were raised by the SGMU over the years to maintain the missionaries. Prayer support was ongoing and personal support through letters, reports and visits continued over the years. For many years the SGMU was a major “supply line” for Baptist missionaries in India, and more recently in other parts of the world, including Papua-New Guinea and Asia.

A feature of the SGMU was the *esprit de corps* that was developed from the outset. One way in which this was achieved was through camps held over the Easter holidays at which the girls got together from all around Queensland and not only had a good time, but learned about the missions and missionaries they were supporting. Many close personal relationships began at these camps. A number of women who commenced with the SGMU many years ago are still personally involved in assisting the missions today, and for some it has been a life-long work.

The first missionary supported by the Queensland SGMU was a South Australian, Miss Gladys Collins. Support for Miss Collins commenced from January 1925 and continued until she left India for the last time in December 1949. A number of Queensland missionaries, such as Emily Lord and Nola Hodgkinson, were also supported. Support included prayer, communication and visits as well as financial support.

Several former members of the SGMU have assisted in the preparation of the SGMU history through their recollections, photographs, assistance and advice. The history contains information about a number of the women missionaries, some of whom were among the first missionaries to bring “Christ to India. And India to Christ” (the motto of the SGMU).

The history includes a brief outline of the work of the ABMS since its inception, information on the early Queensland women missionaries, and a survey of the work undertaken by the missionaries especially in Bangladesh as well as details of how the SGMU was structured and the activities that the young women engaged in over the years.

A significant number of photographs was provided by former SGMU members and many of these have been used throughout the history that is being written.

Vale—Rev. Mel Williams

Long time active member of BHQ, Rev Mel Williams died on 20 July 2011 at the age of 86 years. The funeral service was held at Bracken Ridge on July 25. Mel was an enthusiastic historian who wrote several pieces for BHQ, including “Cameos of Baptist Men in 19th Century Queensland” and “Mission to Queensland 1981-1996”, both of which document important movements for our state. He was also a well known and accomplished numismatist who made many contributions to this work in Queensland, and was honoured by the local organisation for his efforts. A special interest was communion tokens on which Mel wrote interesting papers.

Mel held three University degrees, and his MA dissertation was an important study of Pentecostalism which deserves wider circulation. He combined all of this activity with a wide range of pastoral appointments commencing in 1950 at Gynea NSW, followed by Strathfield/Homebush, Port Kembla, Armidale, and West Ryde, with ten years in Queensland at Nundah and Bundaberg. Several shorter pastorates followed until his full retirement in 1987; after that he served interim pastorates until 1993.

Mel is survived by his wife Madeleine who supported him strongly and a large family. His wise advice and solid support of the BHQ will be greatly missed.