



Baptist Historical Society of Queensland Newsletter

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\$8 family \$20 corporate

PRESIDENT: Rev. Dr David Parker
26 Hall St Alderley Q 4051
Phone 3569331

SECRETARY: Mrs. E. Chataway
11 Bunda St Slacks Creek 4127
Phone 2082639

BOOKS BOOKS

Books are the main feature of this issue. There seems to have been a spate of new books over the last few months. Of course, this is most welcome as it reflects a growing awareness of our history, the value of recording it and making it available to others.

As will be seen, these books represent quite a range, and include local church histories. We appreciate receiving copies of these productions, especially when they represent the work of our own members.

For the information of readers, we have printed an alphabetical list of churches for which we have printed histories in the Baptist Union Archives. These are, of course, available for use for bona fide researchers. But the list shows that there is much work to be done in preparing new histories and updating older productions. We hope that the flow will not diminish - rather, that it will continue to increase as many more churches are added to the list.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

<i>Many Faiths One Nation</i>	page 2
<i>Baptised into One Body</i>	3
<i>Minister's Life Story</i>	4
<i>Minister's Wife's Story</i>	5
<i>Spurgeon Memorabilia</i>	6
<i>Queensland Baptist Church Histories</i>	6
<i>Missing Baptists</i>	7
<i>Baptists in the Callide Valley</i>	8

MANY FAITHS ONE NATION

A guide to the major faiths and denominations in Australia
by Ian Gillman (ARP \$19.95)

This is a 416 page bicentennial publication edited by Dr Ian Gillman of the University of Queensland and published by Collins which features details of all of the main religious groups in Australia. There are separate chapters on thirty-two of them, with another fourteen treated more briefly. The opening section is an essay by the editor giving background to Australia's religious life with some observations about the present and future.

The final part of the book covers interdenominational and ecumenical groups and contains statistical information, statements of faith and some useful maps and diagrams.

Information about the various religious groups, covering history, beliefs, practices and structures, was prepared by representatives of the groups and denominations to ensure accuracy and authenticity. The contributors are all named for identification! The president of the our own Historical Society was the author of the nine-page section on the Baptists. Here is part of what he wrote:

A new and lasting start was made with the arrival on 1 December 1834 of the 28-year-old Reverend John Saunders (1806-1859) who came following an urgent request to the Baptist Missionary Society from some of the Sydney Baptists. He was an extremely capable pastor who firmly established the church during his 13-year term of office. In addition, he was a broad-minded man who took an active interest in public affairs and made a lasting contribution to the welfare of the colony at a time of significant development.

These early churches were all beset by problems of distance, lack of finances, shortage of capable personnel and other difficulties associated with establishing work in the pioneering conditions of the new colonies. There was little organized help from Britain because the Baptist Missionary Society considered that the colonies did not come within its scope. Also, strong beliefs deriving from the historical origins of the denomination in 17th century England about the separation of church

Worship

Services are mostly informal, emphasizing evangelism and Christian living, and usually no clerical garments are worn by the leaders. The pastor will usually lead with others taking part as well, but any other Christian in good standing may be the leader if appointed to do so. There is no set order of worship, but the leader may (or is free to) draw one up for the occasion or follows the traditional pattern of the particular church. The worship service will usually feature Scripture readings, a good deal of congregational singing, extempore prayer from both the leader and others in the congregation, musical items and news and promotion of church activities. The main focus in the latter part of the service will be a substantial biblically based sermon. Churches affected by the charismatic renewal movement emphasize the involvement of the congregation through praise, prayer, singing and leadership.

BAPTISED INTO ONE BODY
A short history of the Baptist Union of Australia
by Basil S. Brown

The bicentennial gathering of Baptists in Sydney in January 1988 was a milestone in our denomination's life, not the least for the opportunity it gave to launch a modest history of the Baptist Union of Australia.

This attractively produced 77 page volume was written by Rev. Dr Basil Brown of Victoria who has had a close connection with the Baptist Union over many years. He was chairman of one of the Union's most successful and important constituents, The Australian Baptist Missionary Society from 1966 to 1977. In addition, he has already produced a full-scale history of the Baptist Union of Victoria.

The first two chapters of BAPTISED INTO ONE BODY tell in simple narrative form the essential details of the background, formation and early life of the Union, supported by a photograph of the signing of the constitution in Sydney on August 25th, 1926. How serious all the gentlemen look, yet at least, the Union did come into existence at that time even if attempts to create such a fellowship during the preceding seventy years had failed!

Meetings to consider such a move had been held in 1897, 1902, 1908, 1911, 1922 and 1925. The advent of the "Australian Baptist" (1913), the Australian Baptist Foreign Mission Board (1913) and talk of an Australian Baptist College all helped in the process. But at last, the various state Unions (or Associations) sent their delegates, and together with overseas representatives, well over two hundred people gathered at Burton Street Tabernacle in Sydney for the inauguration.

Dr Brown's history fully acknowledges that the Baptist Union of Australia has not "caught the imagination of the majority of Australian Baptists" - perhaps because it is so far removed from the daily life of the churches. Despite various attempts to rectify this situation, the Union continues its work bravely, seeking ways in which it can best serve in the circumstances. As the author points out in his chapter on prospects for the future, the Union is now recognized as needing to fulfil a particular role within the life of the denomination. Quoting a review report, he observes that a federal Union "should only perform such functions as are best performed by a Union of churches, leaving the local churches and State Unions and Associations to perform those things best carried out by them." Hence, "the federal body has divested itself of functions best undertaken by its constituents." So we are not likely to be burdened with a massive centralised bureaucracy, which is the way it was at the beginning.

Since much of its work has been done through its various Boards, the majority of the book is devoted to description of the life and activities of those boards. The major boards have been Home Missions, Educational, Young People, Annuity and Advisory, Evangelism, Missions (The Australian Baptist Missionary Society) and Baptist World Relief. The Australian Baptist Publishing House is also closely associated with the Baptist Union. Several other smaller and short-lived groups are also mentioned.

(cont. page 7)

A MINISTER'S LIFE STORY:

Minimum Opportunity Calls for Maximum Effort

The life story of Rev. Edwin V. Keith

We are indebted to the late Rev. E.V. Keith for putting his biography story down in print in the closing stages of his life - in fact he was 87 years of age when he did it! (We must also express our appreciation to Pastor E.C. Brett who urged him to do so, and his wife and family for publishing the manuscript.) It is a simple story, well told and one that places on record a great deal of information and atmosphere about pastoral ministry, Baptist life and some interesting communities in Queensland.

Mr Keith first took up pastoral duties at Coleyville, west of Ipswich, in 1920 and retired finally in 1971 after having served a total of fourteen churches in both city and country. (His first retirement was in 1963) Many other duties were also squeezed into this lengthy ministry. He died on June 10th, 1986.

Even before his ministry opened, his life was full of interest from a personal and family point of view and also from the perspective of Baptist history in Queensland. His family hailed from Scotland and England, but with the death of his maternal grandfather, his grandmother married Mr Rode, who was connected with the family of the German missionaries who settled in the Nundah area in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Then his own parents died before he was four years of age and he was put in the care of his grandmother, now Mrs Rode, who was a devout member of Jireh Baptist Church in Fortitude Valley. But when she was no longer able to care for the young boy (at the age of eight), contact was made with the pastor of the German Baptist Church at Blenheim (now Laidley) who soon found a family who would care for him. So he was introduced to this vital section of Queensland Baptist life, which no doubt accounts for many of the qualities of his later ministry; he was also introduced to farm life in the days when such a livelihood was far from easy. His observations and recollections of life during this time are a valuable record of a particularly interesting section of Queensland Baptist history.

He spent thirteen years in this environment, leaving only when he received a call to the ministry. His first church, Coleyville, had in fact been the 'mother church' of the German Baptist churches in the area, although it was only a short pastorate before he was transferred to Newmarket in Brisbane for the sake of ministerial studies. His studies (1922-5) were all by correspondence as there was no residential or institutional college in those days.

He was ordained at South Brisbane Church in April, 1926 when the preacher was Rev. W. Bell of the Theological College who spoke on the text, "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine" (1 Timothy 4:16) He married Miss Elsie Evans of Greenslopes church on April 30th, 1932. There were two children from the marriage.

(cont. page 7)

A MINISTER'S WIFE'S STORY:

Triumphant through Trials

The true life story of Thelma Howard, by Joan Maxwell

Joan Maxwell has honored her mother by writing this fifty-nine page biography and at the same time, provided us all with a fascinating glimpse of the life of the manse in the generation gone by from the perspective of the ladies. It is presented with an attractive cover, maps showing the various locations which feature in the story and some illustrations. As Rev. S. W. Nickerson, principal of the Baptist Theological College of Queensland, says in the Foreword,

This is a warm biography . . . It is a simple tale told from the perspective of the inner family circle. . . . It is refreshing to have a book about a woman written by a woman. Thelma Howard was the wife of a well known pastor, Rev. Max Howard. But she does not come across in the book simply as someone's wife but as a person in her own right.

The story starts with the marriage of Thelma's parents, Arthur Tulk and Violet, at Ballina in New South Wales. Thelma herself was born there in 1909. The fortunes of the family varied, and the narrative follows them as they moved to various parts of Sydney, with the record of the main family events interwoven with all kinds of family memories. "It is warm, appreciative, often intimate, and relates a number of in-family anecdotes," writes Mr Nickerson, "This gives the book its particular character and should give it appeal to those who appreciate stories with human interest."

It was to be a large family (seven children) and one dogged by difficulties and pressures which placed a heavy burden upon Thelma as the oldest child. Her mother died comparatively young when Thelma was only sixteen years of age, but this loss was tempered shortly afterwards by her conversion through the ministry of itinerant evangelist, Gipsy Smith. She lost her father only a short time later,

In the following years, Thelma shouldered responsibility for the younger children as well as fending for herself, and seeking to maintain and extend her witness and ministry through the Sydney City Mission. That was where she met a young ministerial student (in somewhat hilarious circumstances) to whom she became engaged in 1933, and married on 1 December, 1934.

Not being accepted for missionary service in China, Max proceeded to ordination and continued with pastoral work, his first appointment being Murwillumbah. Other pastorates followed at Stroud in New South Wales and then Silkstone in Queensland.

By this time children had begun to arrive but one proved to be a heavy burden on the family, having suffered injury at birth. Despite domestic responsibilities, Max responded positively to the Baptist Union's call to him to operate the Gospel Wagon as a ministry to people in isolated areas of western Queensland. But he was forced to cut this ministry short after two and a half years and settled in a new pastorate at Toowoomba. Two other pastorates followed (Sandgate
(cont. page 7)

SPURGEON MEMORABILIA

The Historical Society has been presented with an interesting item of Spurgeon memorabilia in the form of a printer's proof of one of his sermons corrected in what is understood to be the handwriting of the great preacher himself! We are grateful to Rev. Neville Abrahams of Brisbane for this welcome acquisition to our collection of material.

The printed version was one of the regular production of the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, now available in printed volumes. It was preached on "Lord's-day morning, April 23rd, 1882" on the text, Luke 24:28, 29 and entitled, "The Blessed Guest Detained." A pencilled note at the end indicates that it was preached on behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society, but as the weather was bad, the congregation was small. Hence the collection "was lessened some fifty pounds." According to the note, "The Society is just now in much need." Hence the appeal is made: "It would be very grateful to the preacher's mind if certain of his readers would help that noble mission to that extent."

It is a long sermon - about sixty-seven inches of four inch wide column. The corrections and alterations are quite fascinating. Some of them are minor corrections to grammar and expression, but others represent quite substantial changes to the sense - either to make the language clearer and more forceful, or to convey a somewhat different and more appropriate message. The type-setter would have despaired at so many corrections, but a student of preaching could well analyse the changes to learn the processes of a master preacher! It would be instructive to see the final printed product and to compare it with the proofs.

The Society expresses its sincere thanks to Mr Abrahams for making this valuable and interesting document available to us.

QUEENSLAND BAPTIST CHURCH HISTORIES IN BAPTIST UNION ARCHIVES

The printed histories of the following churches are presently in the Baptist Union Archives. Other church histories are also welcome!

Albion (40 yrs); Annerley (to 1945 & 1965); Biluela-Callide Valley (1987); Bundaberg (1970); City Tabernacle (1955); Enoggera (1972); Geebung (1973); Greenslopes (1970); Ipswich (1909, 1984); Jireh (1961); Kalbar (1925, 1975); Laidley (1982); Margate (1961, 1986); Maryborough-Fort Street (1933, 1983); Moore Park (1962); Nambour (1960); Nundah (1923); Peace Memorial; Petrie Terrace (1970); Rosalie (1984); Sandgate (1932, 1970); Silkstone (1972) South Brisbane (1897, 1972); Taringa (1939); Toowong (1930); Toowoomba (1975); Warwick (1986); Wavell Heights (1985); Wynnum (1964).

In addition, a number of theological college students have prepared church histories for their graduation theses, copies of which are housed in the college library, as follows:

City Tabernacle, German Baptist Churches, Lanefield-Rosewood, Maryborough, Rosalie, South Brisbane, Taringa, Tent Hill, Warwick.

MISSING BAPTISTS

Missing Baptists? No - not the people, but the papers! The Baptist Union archives only have some of the issues of the official newspaper, "The Queensland Baptist". We are wanting to fill the gaps and it may be that someone has old copies tucked away which they would like to donate.

If you can help with any copies of the "Q.B." between 1926 and 1950 (inc.), please contact the society urgently.

BAPTISED INTO ONE BODY *(cont. from page 3)*

The book concludes with some notes on leading figures in the work of the Union including Revs J.H. Goble, G.P. Rees, A.J. Waldock, W.L. Jarvis, F.A. Marsh, Messrs. G.S. Smith and H.J. Morton and Mrs C. Downing. There is also a convenient listing of officers of the Union and the dates and places of the twenty-two assemblies which have been held up until and including the Bicentennial gathering in Sydney.

A limited number of copies of this book are available through the BHSQ.

MINIMUM OPPORTUNITY *(cont. from page 4)*

His ministry was mostly one of church planting, and as such he had the honour of being the first pastor or first ordained minister of a number of churches, including Torquay, Greenslopes, Holland Park, Boonah, Beaudesert, Banyo and The Gap. He did not come from an advantaged background, but as the subtitle of the book indicates, it was a case of "minimum opportunity" calling for "maximum effort" - and, we might add, the gracious provision of God.

The book is attractively printed in thirty-four two-column pages with many clearly reproduced photographs. Mrs Keith has kindly donated copies to the Historical Society. Enquiries about this limited printing should be addressed to her.

TRIUMPHANT THROUGH TRIALS *(cont. from page 5)*

and Gordon Park), but further difficulties occurred when their son, Allan, was injured in a water ski accident, becoming a paraplegic. The occasion was the day of Max's last services before retirement on medical grounds! The added pressure that this brought proved too much and after further ill health, Max died, leaving Thelma again alone to cope.

The book is well titled and makes stirring reading. As Mr Nickerson observes,

Not everyone is called upon to face the problems and difficulties that Thelma Howard had to face. Yet each of us is called upon to trust God whatever our circumstances. This is the challenge and encouragement of her life.

BAPTISTS IN THE CALLIDE VALLEY

The opening of a new church complex at Biloela is the occasion for the publication of its first printed history. It was prepared by John Parker, a former pastor and church officer and gives in a straight-forward fashion a concise record of the story of the church since the first services began in the area in 1930.

The church has seen more than its fair share of fluctuation, with the centre of activities changing from Thangool to Biloela, the varying strengths of work at Moura and the ministry of various pastors, many of whom in earlier days were appointed for short periods and were not resident in the locality. But in the last few years, there has been a pattern of sustained growth resulting in two major building projects and a much enlarged ministry. Much of the fluctuation has reflected the changes of population and prosperity in the district.

One particularly interesting feature of the book is a supplement containing a description of a trip made to the area in 1942 by Rev. T.H. Ward of Lakes Creek. The 30-page book also contains a number of photographs and an annotated list of pastors and officers. Further copies are available from the church.

POSTSCRIPT

One book we cannot review in this special book issue is the monograph containing papers given at the Australian Bicentenary Baptist Celebrations historical workshop. This volume is called, "Australian Baptists - Past and Present," but it is not yet published. The NSW Baptist Historical Society expects it to be available at its annual meeting in April, priced at a modest \$6.50 posted. Orders may be placed at

NSW BHS, c/- Morling College, 120 Herring Road, Eastwood, NSW 2122.

MEMBERSHIP

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

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I/we wish to join the Baptist Historical Society of Qld. and to support its work of fostering interest in our local heritage.

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Individuals \$5 Families \$8 Churches/Organisations \$20

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