



The Queensland Baptist Forum

The Journal of Baptist Heritage Queensland

No. 95 December 2016

6th Heritage Essay Prize Presentation



The 6th Baptist Heritage Qld (BHQ) Essay Prize was presented at the annual meeting of BHQ on Saturday 29 October by the president, Mr Eric Kopittke. The winner for 2016 was Dean Sandham, a pastor at Birkdale and Cannon Hill Baptist Churches.

The prize is awarded by BHQ for the student gaining the top marks for the essay set in the unit on Baptist History and Principles by Malyon College. This course is offered as an intensive every two years, especially for students seeking ordination.

The winner receives a cash prize, books published by BHQ and membership in the society. The full text of the essay was published in the August issue of the BHQ newsletter, 'QB Forum', copies of which are available for \$2 posted or by donation as a PDF.

Expanded Baptist Archives—Inspection at Annual BHQ Meeting

An interesting feature of the BHQ Annual Meeting on 29 Oct was the inspection of the expanded Baptist Archives. Due to changes in the occupancy at the QB Centre, the Archives has been able to expand into an adjacent room. This provides about 60% greater space, which will be used for more storage and for working and sorting areas.

Called Home: Mavis O'Neill, Lance Hogg

We are sad to record the passing of two BHQ members, Mavis O'Neill and Lance Hogg, OAM. Lance, a prominent person in BUQ affairs, was a generous and faithful member over many years. He died on Oct 25, and his wife, Hope, died the next day. Mavis, who died peacefully on 21 Nov. was an enthusiastic member in recent years and faithfully attended meetings, taking a great interest in all activities. Mavis (nee Ward) was the widow of Rev R (Bob) J O'Neill and sister to Rev JCW (John) Ward, and one of many from the Toowoomba Central church who entered the ministry and were active in Christian service.

BHQ—Meetings 2017: Feb 25; June 10; 28 October (AGM) 2pm @The Baptist Archives

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President: Mr Eric W. Kopittke 98 Yallabee Rd., Jindalee 4074 Ph 3376 4339 kopittke@tpg.com.au

Secretary: Bill Hughes, 7 Dalziel St., Nundah 4012 Ph 3256 8897 Mob 0409 915 685 roslynbill@bigpond.com

Website: <http://dparker.net.au/bhsq.htm>

Archives contact: archives@qb.org.au

Ph 3354 5642

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Baptist Heritage Queensland Annual Report 2016



At the AGM in October 2015 the following appointments were made: Eric Kopittke (President), Dr Anne Klose (Secretary), Hope Colegrove (Treasurer) and Rosemary Kopittke (Publications Officer). Dr Klose tendered her resignation at the end of 2015 due to work commitments and Bill Hughes was appointed to replace her.

BHQ's finances remain in a healthy position. The main item of expenditure during the year was for the copy stand and related items used in relation to the scanning of larger photographs.

On 3 July 2016 the BHQ President, Eric Kopittke, and Pastor Andrew Teo unveiled a large plaque outlining the significance of the Toowong Baptist Church, which is the oldest Baptist Church still in use in Brisbane. The church was opened in 1881 and expanded in 1884, doubling its size. It is recognised as a modest example of a timber framed church in the Federation Carpenter Gothic style.

Further work on BHQ's 'Plaques Project' is continuing and approaches are currently being made to the owners of other buildings (eg. City Tabernacle and the old Fortescue street church building at Nundah) to get their views on having a plaque attached to their building.

The BHQ Essay Competition on Baptist history and principles is run in conjunction with Malyon College and awarded every second year. The 2016 winner was Dean Sandham of the Birkdale church with an essay titled 'The Autonomy of the Local Church – Biblical or Historical?' Dean's prize was a cheque for \$100, books published by BHQ and one honorary membership of BHQ.

For a number of years BHQ maintained a presence at the Annual Conventions through manning a display table of literature and photographs. Under the current format of the Convention this approach is not effective and in the last year or two we have been placing advertising material in the delegates' packs. We are currently assessing the value of this approach.

The BHQ publication *Queensland Baptist Forum* has been produced on a quarterly basis this year. The *Forum* goes to those on our membership list and others. It contains a variety of interesting articles, mainly on historical subjects, but also covers other matters such as Baptist principles.

Bill Hughes, Secretary

Baptist Church Archives Qld Annual Report (abbrev)

Archives Activity: There have been some good developments in the Archives this year, especially that the adjacent room has been made available, as 'The Annex'. It provides a lot of extra space, but unfortunately, it is not permanently air-conditioned or de-humidified so we cannot store critical material in it; also there is no direct access from the main Archives room. However, it will free up space in the main area, and will be good as a reading and sorting area at least. Earlier we obtained a lot of new furniture, and a much better, though still old, photocopier. These additions were the result of changes to occupancy of the QB Centre. From our QB budget, we have also gained a good quality camera; it goes with the copy stand provided by BHQ previously for digitisation of awkward, large and fragile items.

There has been a steady flow of queries from churches, individuals and Qld Baptists, some of which have extended over a period and involved some in depth investigation. In some cases, there has been a pleasing outcome with the information being well used. There have been several acquisitions, and opportunities for advising local churches on archiving principles. Our 'Guide Sheets' and Manual are being updated to reflect continuing developments.

Regular activity has included Anne Cameron's continued work on checking box contents, with a focus on local church materials, and some QB departments, and updating the 'Historical Record'. With more space now available, we have the opportunity of considering approaching churches, especially older ones, about the safe storage of their earliest material. The bio-database continues to be updated regularly.

Digital archiving continues to be an increasing focus. Bill Hughes has been working steadily on digitising the photograph collection, which includes a comprehensive index. The digital archiving system, was installed by the Baptist Union at the end of 2015, and is now being used increasingly. It seems to be a satisfactory solution, at a moderate cost. Now plans need to be made for digitisation of other earlier BUQ material. The digitisation of the last batch of QB magazine, 1991-2005, should be a high priority.

Research: There has been slow progress on the Darling Downs history project. We have obtained the official church statistics for 2015 from QB administration to add to our master database.

QB magazine: We have contributed a column to each issue of the QB magazine. There has been only minimal response from readers (but one this week from Ireland!). Hopefully it is received positively.

Wider contacts: We have shared in the meetings of state Baptist Archivists, with the 4th session taking place in November 2016, this time with all states and territories except Tasmania to participate.

David Parker, Archivist, with Bill Hughes, Anne Cameron

Baptists in the Golden West—Dalby: the Origins

By David Parker

This is a further episode in the current BHQ project on Baptist witness in the Darling Downs, and tells the story of the origins of Baptist work in the important town of Dalby. Further details are welcome for this draft version.

A century of Baptist interest in Dalby

The town of Dalby, 80 kms north-west of Toowoomba, was first settled in the early 1840s and soon became a key centre for the vast pastoral and agricultural area surrounding it. It was named and proclaimed a town in 1854, becoming a municipality in 1863 with a population of 500. In later years, it continued to grow strongly, despite regular flooding from the Myall Creek on which it sits.

By 1870 Anglican, Catholic and Presbyterian churches had been established, along with banks,



The Gospel Waggon, Rev A.J.M. Howard (left), in the Dalby area (the name on the vehicle and in reports was always 'Waggon')

schools and other community organisations. The railway line reached the town in 1868 and prompted a great deal of economic development; it extended further west after a few years. Today with a population in excess of 12,000, and the centre of a rich resources area as well as the traditional agricultural industries, Dalby enjoys a virile and diverse Christian witness.

When the Queensland Baptist Home Mission was established in 1883 there were only 3 churches outside the Brisbane-Ipswich area – Maryborough, Rockhampton, and Toowoomba. But there was a long list of towns of reasonable size where it was believed Baptist churches should be established. Dalby was one of them – even though its population was then still well under 2000.

There were a few Baptists living in the area, some temporarily, who often maintained links with their home churches. One of the institutions in the town was a sanatorium, the only such state-run institution in Australia, where a patient in late 1907 was Alice Higlett, the wife of the Baptist pastor at Albion; sadly she could not be helped, and died a short time later. Earlier, Windsor Road church reported one of their members had been at the sanatorium for four years without much improvement either.

As the work of the Home Mission continued to strengthen, Dalby was again on the horizon. In 1913 it was reported that there was a 'splendid field' of ministry there, prompting another visit by the Superintendent in December of that year to check for opportunities of progress. In the aftermath of World War I, efforts were made to reach out to Baptists living in remote and isolated areas of the state. Regular

newsletters had been sent to them, and their locations were plotted on a large map displayed at the Assembly. At Dalby, six people had been identified, but still no practical steps were taken to commence a church there.

About ten years later, excitement was stirred when an anonymous letter to the pastor of the Toowoomba church was presented at a Baptist Union meeting stating that there was a block of land in the town owned by the Baptists. This might have provided a welcome base for work there, but hopes were dashed when further investigation revealed the land had been sold at least twenty years earlier for £2 to pay the rates which were well in arrears!

There continued to be occasional references to Dalby in later years – mostly when various churches reported that their members were moving to or from Dalby for work or because of family connections; there were also a few residents who were subscribers to the monthly newspaper and donors to Baptist work. Christian Endeavour and other conventions held at nearby towns such as Toowoomba and Warwick were often supported by visitors from Dalby as well. Roy Wilson, who was born in Dalby, joined the Baptist ministry after a varied career in banking, naval service during the war and farming at Bell; the Wilson home in Dalby was later used occasionally for services.

It was not until nearly a century after the foundation of the town that Baptist work made its appearance. The population was now just over 4000, and prospects for its development were good in the wake of considerable economic growth during World War II. It was being recognized as a key regional growth centre.

Gospel Waggon & help from Toowoomba

The post-war period was also a time when the Baptist Union of Queensland was seeking to expand into untouched areas of the state, and it made moves in a number of ways to fulfil this long held dream. The biggest initiative was the Gospel Waggon, a self-contained Dodge truck with living quarters and ministry equipment, which was launched in September 1946. For 7 years it roamed the state conducting evangelistic meetings, church services, and school RI classes; a key role was visiting isolated and remote Baptists. Rev A J M (Max) Howard was the first missionary (1946-48), and he was followed by Rev J Wilbur Fletcher (1949-52) (see full story in *Forum* 2004 No 57)

The Darling Downs was an important area visited by the Gospel Waggon. The first contact was on 6 Nov 1946 when Mr Howard travelled to Dalby with Rev Horace White, the pastor of the Toowoomba church. They visited a number of people who were either Baptists or who had some Baptist connections,

and found a warm welcome. One family told them, 'We will be in anything you do for Baptists here.' It was agreed that starting a Baptist work in the area would be relatively easy, but it might be difficult to sustain it, although teen age evangelism seemed to be a promising avenue of ministry.

The Waggon was not back in the area again until mid-1948. On 3 June, Mr Howard and Mr White, with Vern Reithmuller, re-visited some earlier contacts, as well as new people, including a dedicated young lady teaching school at Kaimkillenbun. An open air evangelistic service was held near Dalby's water tower in the early evening. The next evening, after more visiting during the day, a meeting was held in the Digger's Hall with a short devotional service, to discuss the possibilities of starting Baptist work. The half dozen people in attendance were positive about the prospects, but they were not all known to each other. So they decided that a 'fellowship' meeting should be held monthly so they could become better acquainted. Mr George-Seymour Smith of Matheson Street was listed as the contact person.

An initial service was held at the Oddfellows Hall on Friday 25 June, 1948, with a number of people from the Toowoomba church in attendance to support the local Baptists in their efforts. This meeting was followed by regular services on the fourth Friday night of each month, conducted by Mr White and the Toowoomba church. Advertisements placed in the local paper from early July invited Baptists and others to attend the services and to contact Mr White or Mr Seymour-Smith. A week-night was chosen as the time for the service so that people could continue to support the churches they were involved with in the town for time being, but it was hoped that in due course, a regular Baptist work could commence. Other churches operating at the time included Church of England, Presbyterian, Methodist (attended by several of the Baptists), Lutheran, Assemblies of God and Salvation Army.

Response was encouraging, but just as momentum was beginning to build up, Mr White announced that he had accepted a call to Annerley Baptist Church in Brisbane and would be soon leaving Toowoomba. His departure around the end of the year damaged the nascent work at Dalby, but services did continue over the Christmas period in the Oddfellows Hall, in New Street. The new minister of the Toowoomba church who arrived at the beginning of 1949, was Rev Max Howard, who had just concluded his work with the Gospel Waggon. Although he was supportive of the Dalby initiative, he was not able to offer much practical assistance immediately.

The Baptist Union explained that it could not intervene to take the lead because the infant work in Dalby was in the hands of the Toowoomba Church. So the services languished for several months. Advertising resumed in late August 1949, when Mr Howard re-established the monthly Friday night services in the Oddfellows Hall. He also approached the Baptist Union Evangelistic Committee and the Home Mission about another visit by the Gospel Waggon, now operated by Rev J Wilbur Fletcher.

Despite these difficulties, there was still a firm interest in Baptist work in Dalby. Some Baptists from

the area attended a preliminary meeting considering the establishing of the Downs and Lockyer District Baptist Association in September, 1949. This was a good move which would bear beneficial results in the future.

Intensive ministry and disappointments

The Baptist Union responded positively to Rev Max Howard's plea for help and the Gospel Waggon was sent to the area again. Rev J W Fletcher arrived early in November 1949 and remained until the end of December. He conducted 'Gospel Waggon' services on Friday nights and Sundays, and engaged in intensive visitation.

Then in December 1949, the Home Mission announced that it would appoint an experienced pastor and evangelist, Rev Ron T Farquhar, to take up the work at Dalby in early 1950 with the idea of getting it firmly grounded. He would stay for three months and depending on progress, would be able to remain longer until a Home Mission pastor was appointed. Supply ministers from as far away as Brisbane would conduct the services during January after the Gospel Waggon had moved to the beach areas of the state for ministry during the holiday period.

Mr Farquhar arrived as planned in February 1950. A Sunday School, commenced by Mr Seymour-Smith in January struggled on, and advertisements were again placed in the local newspaper during making an urgent plea for support from Baptists and other interested people. They said, '*Members of the Baptist Church in Dalby and district and all interested friends who desire to have fellowship in a Gospel preaching and Bible-teaching witness are requested to communicate with Mr Seymour-Smith, 6 Matheson St, Dalby.*'

Mr Farquhar came to Dalby keen to contribute to Baptist witness in the town, but he found that the number of people and the practical support for the work was far smaller than he had been led to believe. He was also unwell, suffering severe migraines, and consequently, only stayed for one month before returning to Brisbane.

So once again, the hope for a regular Baptist witness in Dalby was uncertain, although morning and evening services as well as the Sunday School continued. This sudden turn of events disappointed and confused the local people who understandably complained that there was a lack of consistency and direction by the Baptist Union, which was detrimental to their local witness and the hopes of growing a solid fellowship and the formation of a church. They felt that Baptists then worshipping with other churches and any new people would not be attracted to give regular support to the Baptist work if it was in such an uncertain condition. During February and March, the maximum number at the morning services was only about 6, while on a couple of occasions, the numbers at the evening services exceeded a dozen.

The Superintendent of the Home Mission, Rev AH Brooks, made an emergency visit to Dalby with Rev Max Howard on 12 March 1950 to try to rescue the situation. He found the local people despondent and tense, and not willing to put much effort into building the fellowship or the Sunday School in the

circumstances. They asked for a permanent pastor who would have the energy and drive to lead them on a long term basis. If one was appointed, the people indicated that there would be good financial and other support. In response, the Superintendent said that he



Dalby Baptist Church 1958

two months, and Mr Brooks offered to come from Brisbane again for services after that period. Another local preacher, Mr Chris Schull, a pharmacist of Oakley, also gave his assistance. It was also suggested that the revival of the home fellowship group would be advantageous.

Sudden Growth 1950-1955

This was enough to produce a positive outcome. After the morning service on 9 April 1950 at the home of Mr and Mrs Heit, corner Arthur and Thorley Streets, a meeting was held to form a Baptist church in Dalby. A constitution was adopted and the seven people in attendance became the foundation members - Mr and Mrs G Seymour Smith, F Heit, C L Miller and Mrs C Duke. A financial statement was adopted and the positions of deacon, secretary and treasurer filled. It was also decided to write to the Baptist Union seeking to be recognized as a Home Mission station and requesting that a Home Missionary be appointed as soon as possible. (The people at Dalby found that their action in constituting a church was considered premature by the Baptist Home Mission; they were instructed that a petition should first have been sent to the Baptist Union for acceptance! This 'error' was rectified later - the church was 're-constituted' with 10 members and officially recognized by the Baptist Home Mission in February 1951.)

There was another welcome boost. One of those present at the meeting on 9 April was Mr C L (Lou) Miller (his brother, Jim, from Holland Park Baptist Church in Brisbane chaired the meeting.) Lou Miller had been a partner in the Toowoomba-based accountancy firm, Statham, Cheesman & Co., working in Roma for the previous five years, but had recently arrived in Dalby to set up a new office there. This was in part to expand the business, but Lou Miller knew that there were efforts to start a Baptist witness in Dalby and was keen to support it in whatever way he could. He offered to purchase property for the use of the Baptists, and even put it in the name of the Baptist Union. Soon, Lou, who was appointed secretary of the church at the April meeting, was hosting morning services in his home, 22 Bunya Street. Sunday School and evening services were held some distance away in the Oddfellows Hall.

After supporting the Dalby work enthusiastically,

Lou, then aged 30 years, applied to the Baptist Union for training for the ministry in September 1950, and was appointed to Gympie Baptist Church from the following year. In a lengthy ministerial career, he went on to serve a number of churches, and become leading figure amongst Queensland Baptists, finally becoming President in 1985-86. He was especially known for his leadership of the Baptist Community Services department, which expanded rapidly during his period as the first full-time Director, 1970-1986.

The Home Mission also responded to the approaches of Mr Howard and, recognizing the new outlook at Dalby, appointed a pastor to lead it. He was Alan Back, of Toowong Baptist Church, who had applied to the Home Mission at the same time as Lou Miller, and was a good friend of R T Farquhar. Ever since his conversion a few years earlier, Mr Back had sensed a call to Christian work in the western parts of the state. He had trained in Sydney and began working as an independent itinerant evangelist. His application for the Baptist Home Mission was conditional on him being able to fulfil this calling to outback areas - a calling that continued throughout his life.

Aged in his late 20s, and married with one child, he took up leadership of the work in Dalby enthusiastically in September 1950 on a temporary appointment to be reviewed at the end of the year. He used the Baptist Union's new mobile unit which he had himself had initiated, and bore its operational costs. This allowed for easy access to other nearby towns such as Bell and Kumbarilla, where effective ministry was soon established. In Dalby the services continued at the Oddfellows Hall and the home of Lou Miller. The Downs and Lockyer District Association assisted practically by promising to supplement Home Mission funding to the extent of £120 per annum. Another visit by Rev J W Fletcher with the Gospel Waggon in mid-1951 built on earlier work and helped the church to advance further.

Progress was so good that the church was accepted as an affiliated member of the Baptist Union at the 1951 annual Assembly held in September. Later developments included Christian Endeavour, and the recommencement of the Women's Union, and after a couple more years, a Men's Fellowship. Easter Conventions, with a focus on youth, were held in 1952 and 1954, arranged by the Downs and Lockyer Association with considerable support from the Baptist Union youth and evangelism departments.

However, Alan Back now saw the need for a children's home in the town and decided to put his energies into this project. So by the end of 1951, he resigned from the church and the Home Mission to establish the 24 bed facility on a private basis. It was named Bethel Children's Home and remained in operation for about 30 years; the Backs remained in fellowship with the church for this time and later.

The Home Mission appointed George W Peck, as the new pastor, taking up duties in March 1952. Services reached about 30 in number with a healthy Sunday School, while outreach continued to extend beyond the town, including Maclagan. It was becoming necessary to find a permanent home for the church, so fund raising and planning was underway for a property.

(Continued on page 8)

Baptism and Communion

Glimpses from the pages of The Queensland Baptist

By David Parker

Other versions of these two articles appeared in the *qb magazine* in the February/March and August/September 2016 issues. They are short accounts of some of the references to these two ordinances as seen in the original *Queensland Baptist* late in the 1800s, to reveal the thinking and atti-

Baptism-our signature belief!

Believer's baptism by immersion is our signature belief, but today attitudes and practices vary greatly. Like church membership, for some people it is of comparatively little importance while others hold deep convictions about it. It was different years ago - if the pages of the early issues of the *Queensland Baptist* (QB) are any guide.

When the magazine started in the 1880s there were regularly articles expounding the full significance of baptism, often quoting theologians and well-known preachers, both local and abroad. There was a year-long series of articles under the pen-name, Adelphos, covering all aspects of the topic (including responses to reader feedback). There were also statements by Baptist Union presidents and other officials and one assembly discussion was reported in full. Statistical reports kept track of the numbers of baptisms locally and elsewhere. There was even a serialised short story featuring the thinking of 'Frank and Hilda' about it!

The main features of baptism stressed in these articles included its scripturalness, immersion as the proper mode, the need for personal faith (as against church tradition or family heritage), the example of our Lord and his command which made it a duty (hence the term ordinance, not sacrament) and its witness to the gospel.

The QB also referred frequently to books being published on the topic and statements by people from other churches. Those against believer's baptism by immersion had the weakness of their arguments clearly identified, but sometimes there were statements by well-known people or church bodies affirming the truth of the Baptist position which were warmly welcomed!

The historicity of believer's baptism as the original form of the rite was also important; often non-Baptists conceded that infant baptism only came into vogue well after the New Testament days. An interesting example of this was the discovery of the late 1st century document, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, (reported in 1884) which clearly referred to believer's baptism by immersion as the norm.

The QB did not hesitate to discuss controversial issues about baptism. For example, when the Churches of Christ commenced work in Queensland, there were articles critical of their view that baptism was a necessary part of salvation. Similarly, occasional public statements by the Anglicans going in the same direction were also challenged. A Methodist report about 'family baptism' was strongly condemned.



A river baptism

Even some other Baptist groups were condemned for laxity because they promoted open membership - which does not require baptism at all.

These responses were in addition to standard defences against infant baptism by the mainline Protestant churches which were frequently the focus of public controversy with sermon series, public debates and newspaper articles. Not surprisingly, when a person from one of these churches was baptised by immersion as a believer, it was given prominence - one testified he had been a member of his own church for 50 years before seeing the truth of the example of Jesus!

But perhaps more interesting was how reports from churches in the QB reflected grass roots beliefs. For example, it was often said that those baptised 'followed their Lord', or they made a 'public profession' and 'witness'; others reports referred to fulfilling the 'duty' laid upon them, or being 'obedient' to the teaching of Scripture and of the Lord. Baptism was linked closely with fellowship with other believers and church membership. It was common to speak of baptism in terms of death to the old way of life and spiritual renewal in union with the risen Christ. A similar idea was reflected in reports of 'refreshment' for the church and baptism as a means to growth in holiness.

It was regularly stated that even though baptism was not a 'saving' ordinance, a part of, or a condition of, salvation, it was a witness that could lead others to faith. On one occasion, a baptism was considered a unifying action to help heal tragic splits in a church. Often there were reports of people, often older, who had finally seen the truth and decided for believer's baptism, despite the hardships of illness, age, family or church pressure.

There were occasional references to the practical side of the service. Usually the sermon was on some aspect of baptism, often firmly worded both towards the congregation and also as public statement of Baptist beliefs. However one report said the preacher

took a 'practical', not a 'controversial', approach, focusing on discipleship and personal faith.

There were few references to the order of service but occasionally it was noted that the candidates gave personal testimonies. Communion and reception into membership were often part of the baptismal service. One reader frowned on the singing of a chorus as the candidate was immersed; he said it was very inappropriate because baptism was, according to Romans 6, a spiritual 'burial', and so should not be trivialised! His plea was not heeded at the time, so 20 years later he complained again in virtually the same terms!

Not all churches had baptisteries in their chapels so the service might take place in the open air (the original 'primitive' way, said one report). Toowoomba used the council 'gravel pit', Charters Towers had a corrugated iron tank; at Gympie they were keen to get a church so they could baptise decently.

So Baptists in earlier times did have strong views about this matter, and they believed that in an ecumenical climate there was definite need for the Baptist witness to the truth of Scripture to be heard. There was one report that bemoaned Baptists who had joined other churches and failed to speak out for the truth. At least they did not allow their children to be christened, claiming to be still 'Baptists in principle', but the writer thought that they were more like 'Baptists without principle'!

Communion: Whose Table? What Table?

Most Baptist churches have a section in their doctrinal statement which says they observe 'two ordinances taught by the Lord Jesus Christ - namely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.' The first is treated above, and now we look at the other - communion.



A central communion table—City Tabernacle

Today there seems to be no set pattern for communion, which results in a lot of variety - even within the same church. There is also a strong tendency to informality and simplification, in the extreme! Sometimes, however, there is artificial elaboration, apparently to add interest. In many churches there is no longer a permanent communion table situated centrally in the church - it is moved out of the way of the main worship activities, and brought out only when needed, suggesting communion is less important than it used to be. The official Baptist Union doctrinal statement does not give any guidance on practice, and

only says it is a 'memorial' to help us remember 'the sacrifice' of Christ.

Because communion is observed frequently, any difficulty we may have with its practice is difficult to ignore. So can we learn anything from earlier days? A quick glance through the pages of the *Queensland Baptist* in 1890s suggests we can!

First of all the name - both the terms 'communion' and 'Lord's supper' (or the 'Lord's table') were in common use. Occasionally they were combined - 'the communion of the Lord's Supper' which highlights the most common understanding. The point is that this is the service where we can engage in direct and intimate fellowship with the Lord, and so draw spiritual strength and power from him. It is the table at which the Lord is tangibly present as the Host, and it is He who calls believers to come to him - as one editor of the QB said - so we can enjoy 'sweet communion' with the Lord.

So although they usually avoided the word 'sacrament' in preference to 'ordinance', their understanding contrasted strongly with today's subjective 'memorial only' approach - this was a service which would strengthen the believer spiritually, not just a kind of 'visual aid' to help us remember the cross, something we carry out just because we are commanded to do so.

It was also mentioned frequently in the QB that communion had a 'social' side to it. It was, as William Higlett said in 1899, 'a partaking in common, intended to keep believers at one with each other, to remind them that they are all one in Christ Jesus, and should have the same care one for another as for themselves.' Naturally it was the occasion when people were officially received into church membership.

Because of this communal importance, Queensland Baptists did not favour the practice of taking the elements to people in their homes, there was no child communion, and they did not approve of communion being conducted at any Christian gathering that was not a church's worship service (such as an interdenominational convention). Even celebrations at the Baptist Assembly were questioned because it was pointed out that the Baptist Union was not a church - it would be different, they said, if the service were conducted by one of the churches with the Assembly delegates invited to attend as guests.

Because this is the Lord's table and we come at his invitation for a deeply significant meeting with him, it is not surprising that our forebears thought that this was no casual event - it was a 'duty' as well as a 'privilege' and 'full of solemnity.' It was a special service following the regular morning service (in some churches every Sunday, but others twice a month). Absence without good reason was a serious matter, and attendance cards were used in some churches in the interests of pastoral care. Furthermore, the participation of deacons in this service was regarded as an important and integral part of their overall spiritual leadership of the church.

This also explains why communion services were held at special times in the life of the church. For example, Taringa church rejoiced when, as a new church plant, they were at last given the privilege by their mother church of conducting a communion ser-

vice. South Brisbane held communion as part of the annual meeting, and many churches conducted communion on New Year's Day and other special milestones.

Also the communion service was a particularly important feature of the Annual Baptist Assembly and was always reported as a rich spiritual experience. It is no wonder then that, when there was serious discussion about whether an open membership church could be a member of the Baptist Union, the Assembly communion service was at the focus. It was decided that 'immersed believers only shall be invited to participate' at any Baptist Union communion service. There were also occasional sermons and discussion panels about the meaning of the service at the Assembly and at Ministers' Fraternal meetings.

There were some practical matters up for discussion as well. Many people were concerned at this time about the devastating damage done by the abuse of alcohol in the community, giving rise to strong support for the Temperance movement. So the use of alcoholic wine in communion was considered highly inappropriate and there was a move towards the use of the unfermented variety. The main problem was that this was hard to get and expensive, so a few articles appeared with instructions on how to make it at home! Most ministers were said to be total abstainers.

Individual cups were also being introduced for

reasons of hygiene, but there was one report deriding this on theological and biblical grounds – how could 'many' cups symbolise the 'unity' of the church? And besides, the Bible clearly said that Jesus passed 'the' cup to his disciples. (There was no discussion about the type of bread or whether one loaf should be used.)

The high importance of communion in the life of the churches and members was expressed in another practical way with the occasional donation of a specially made communion table to a church, and in the case of Albion in 1891, a special set of elaborately inscribed communion vessels.

This is all just from one short period at the end of the 19th century – and it was not surprising there were careful steps taken to instruct young people on the importance of communion. It was well summed up in this statement (August 1899):

They who in penitence and faith partake of this sacrament, feed spiritually upon Christ as the nourishment of the soul, by which they are strengthened and refreshed for the duties and trials of life. Christians partake in common of the Lord's Supper to show their oneness in Christ, to confess openly their faith in Him, and to give one another a pledge of brotherly love.

(Continued from page 5) **Dalby—the Origins**

Mr Peck led the church effectively for two years before he was transferred back to Brisbane where was able to continue his highly promising university studies; he was married not long before he left. After a few more years in pastoral work in Queensland, the Pecks offered for missionary service. They spent 5 years in Assam, India in theological education, and then moved to the United States where George had an outstanding career as a theologian and seminary president.

His replacement was Pastor E E Davison, on transfer from Gayndah, who commenced early 1954; he was then in his late 50s and well experienced in pioneer situations. Services were still held in the Oddfellows Hall until July 1951, but then they shifted to the Drill Hall in Matheson Street, where they remained for a couple of years.

Land and Building 1951-54

By now, the building program was well under way. The first step had already been taken by Alan Back, who had been looking for suitable properties from the beginning. In June 1951, after some disappointments, he became aware of a deceased estate at 82 Drayton Street which was going onto the market. At the auction, he made a personal bid and secured 2 blocks totalling 34.6 perches with a frontage of 132 feet, for £615. Soon after, this property passed to the church. The plan was to replace the house on it with a church. Efforts were made to secure building materials, which were in short supply, but in May 1953, these plans changed and a double block was purchased across the road at 89 Drayton St for £775. It was intended to recruit volunteers to erect a church, with work to start in January 1954. Council approval for the project was obtained late in 1953, and work began under the leadership of church secretary, Vern Reithmuller.

Meanwhile, services which had been held in the Drill Hall since July 1951 were moved to the manse at 82 Drayton Street from August 1953. This was satisfactory while Pastor Peck was in residence, but became very difficult when Pastor Davison moved in with his family. So it was with great relief that progress on the new church was rapid enough for it to be used for services well before its official opening. The first service was held in it on 14 March. The 1954 Easter Convention was also able to use the building.

The official opening was performed by the HM Superintendent and BUQ President, Rev A H Brooks on 23 May, 1954 before a crowd of more than 200 people. Pastor G Peck, who had been pastor when the building work started, returned for the occasion. The dedicatory prayer was taken by Rev R G Walker of Warwick, and many other local and visiting ministers attended. Mr Brooks spoke about the importance of the project and the fellowship, being 'a gateway to the west.' The total cost was £1455, with an offering of over £200 taken on the day. The building was in a T-shape, with the main hall measuring 40' x 22' and with a cross-section for vestries and class room 46' x 22'.

Independence and Growth—1955

Now it is new home, which would be improved and enlarged on several occasions over the next 50 years until the property was sold, the church continued to grow and develop. In March 1955 it was strong enough to be granted independence from the Home Mission, after only 6 years – which was regarded as something of a record. Now the church took on the responsibility of being a true 'gateway to the west' as it consolidated its own local activities and reached out to other communities nearby and further afield.